

VIDYASAGAR

Such was his mastery over Sanskrit that the Sanskrit College of Kolkata conferred the title 'Vidyasagar' on its young student. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891) went on to become the principal of the same college. As Inspector of schools, he established several schools in Bengal, particularly for girls. He simplified Bengali to make it easy for the common man. He is thus regarded as the Father of modern Bengali prose. A gentle crusader, he championed the cause of women. Through his efforts, widow remarriage was legalised, and restrictions were placed on child marriages and bigamy, that were then widely prevalent.

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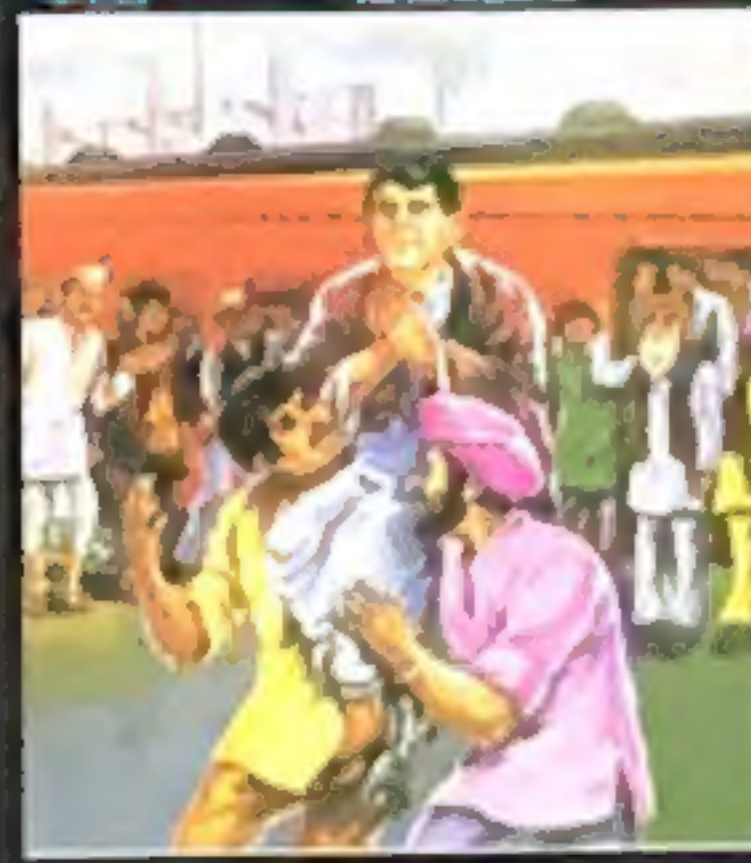
BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR



DAYANANDA



DESHBANDHU CHITTARANJAN DAS



JAGADIS CHANDRA BOSE



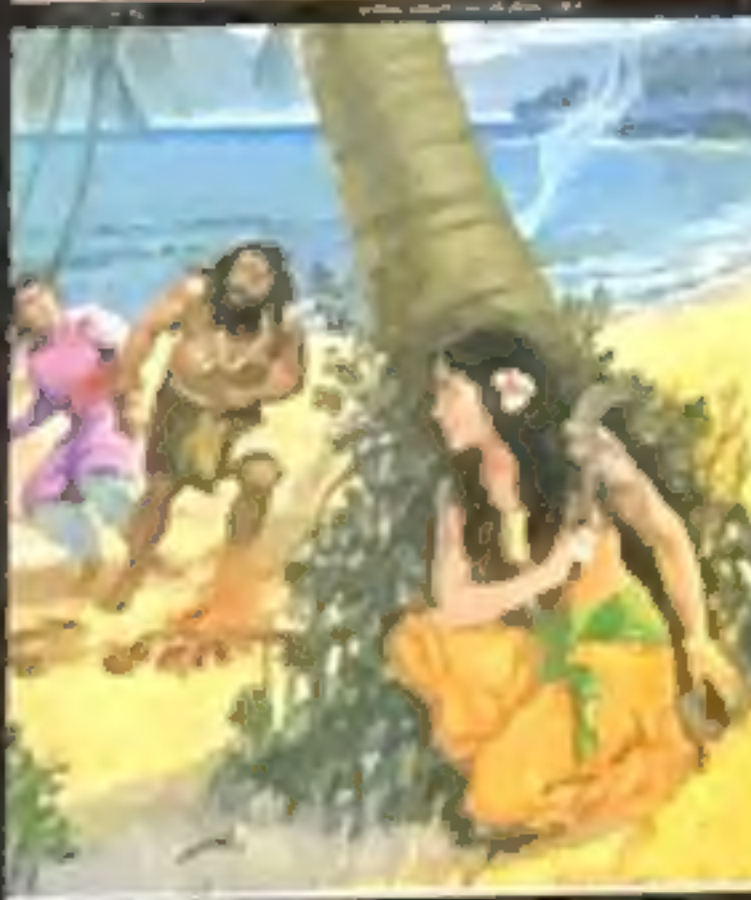
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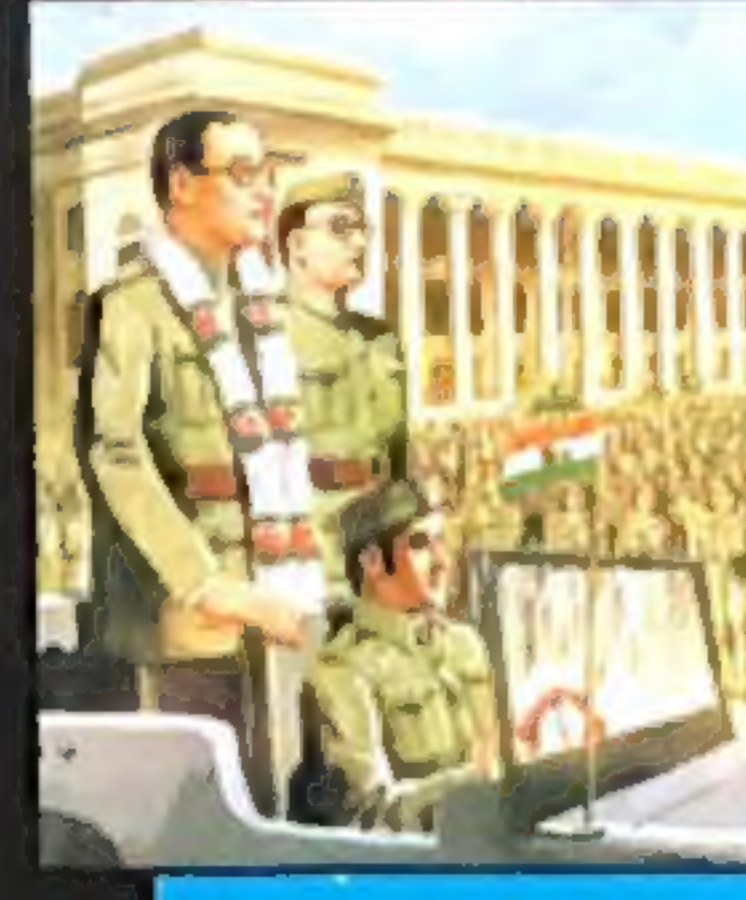
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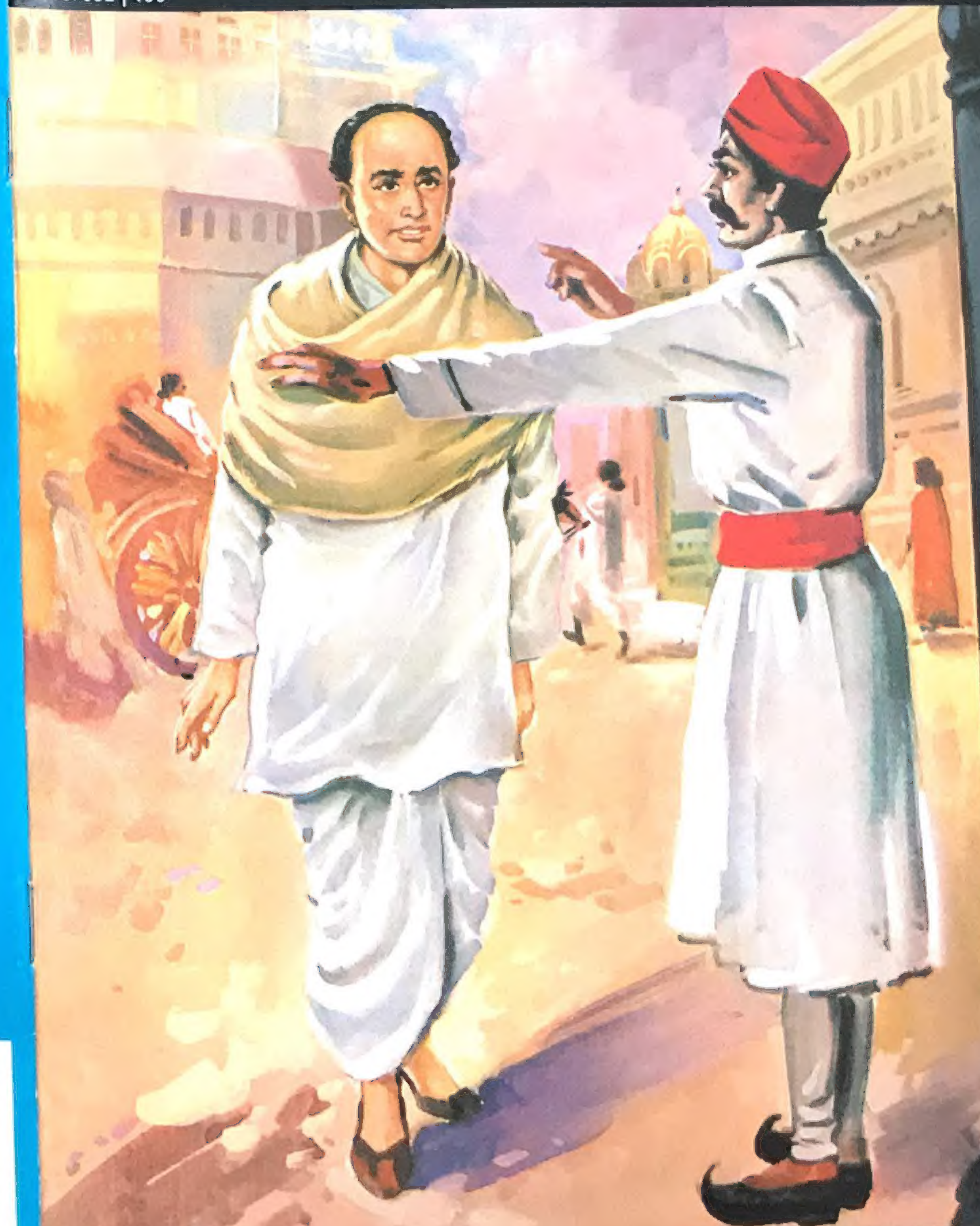
VISIONARIES



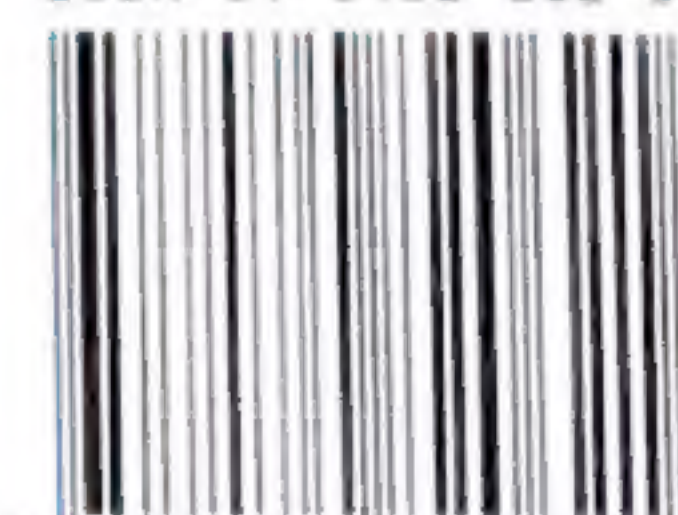
VIDYASAGAR

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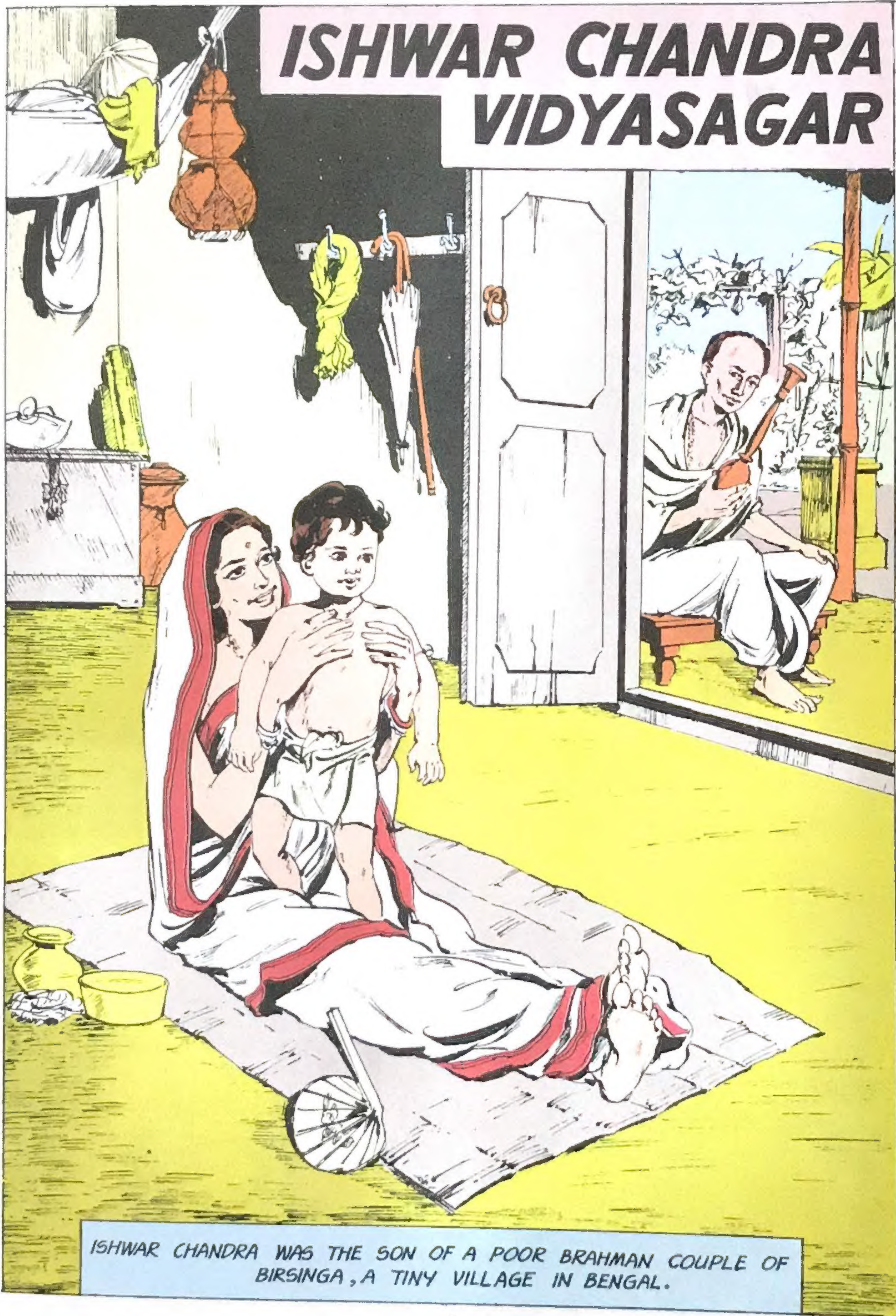


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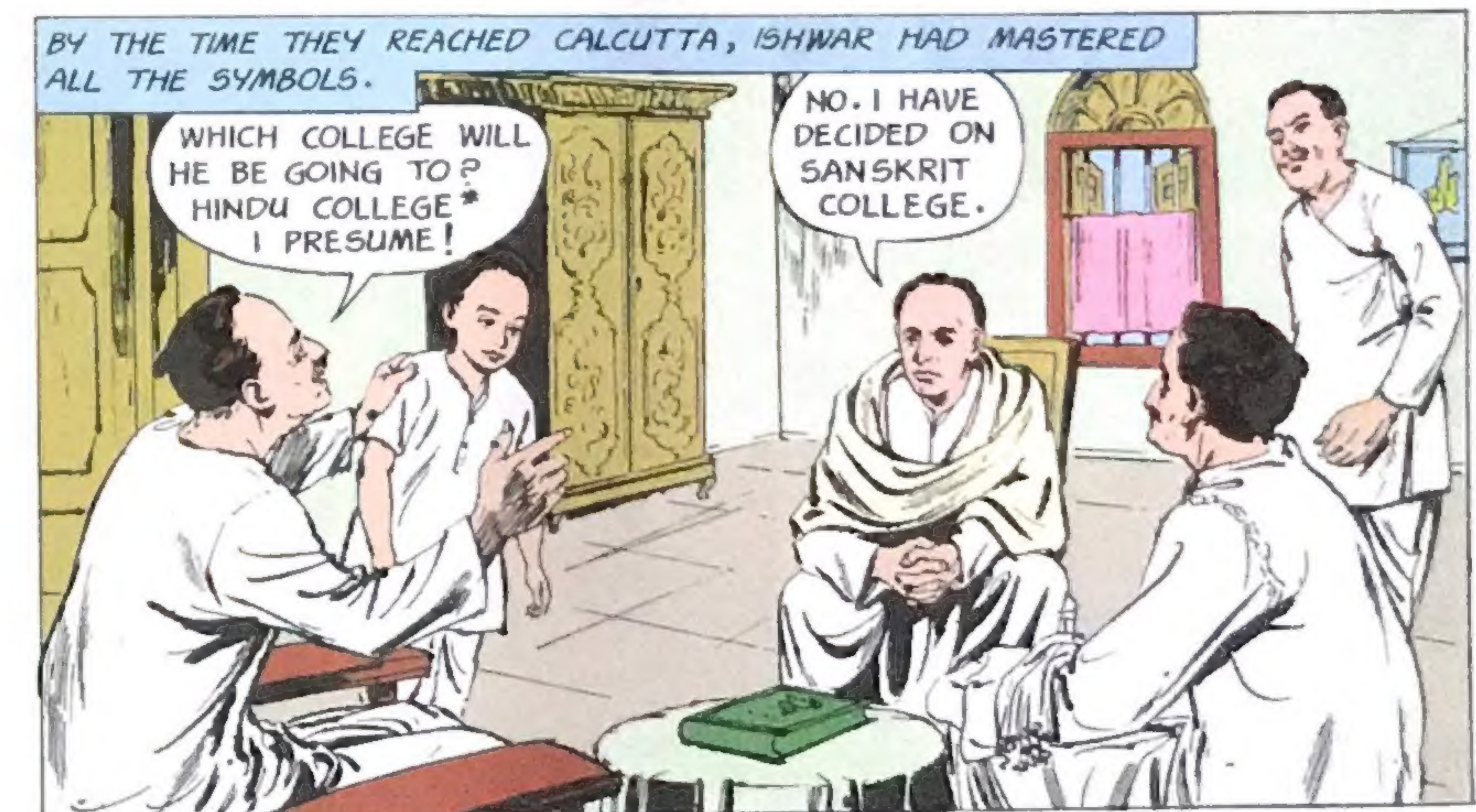
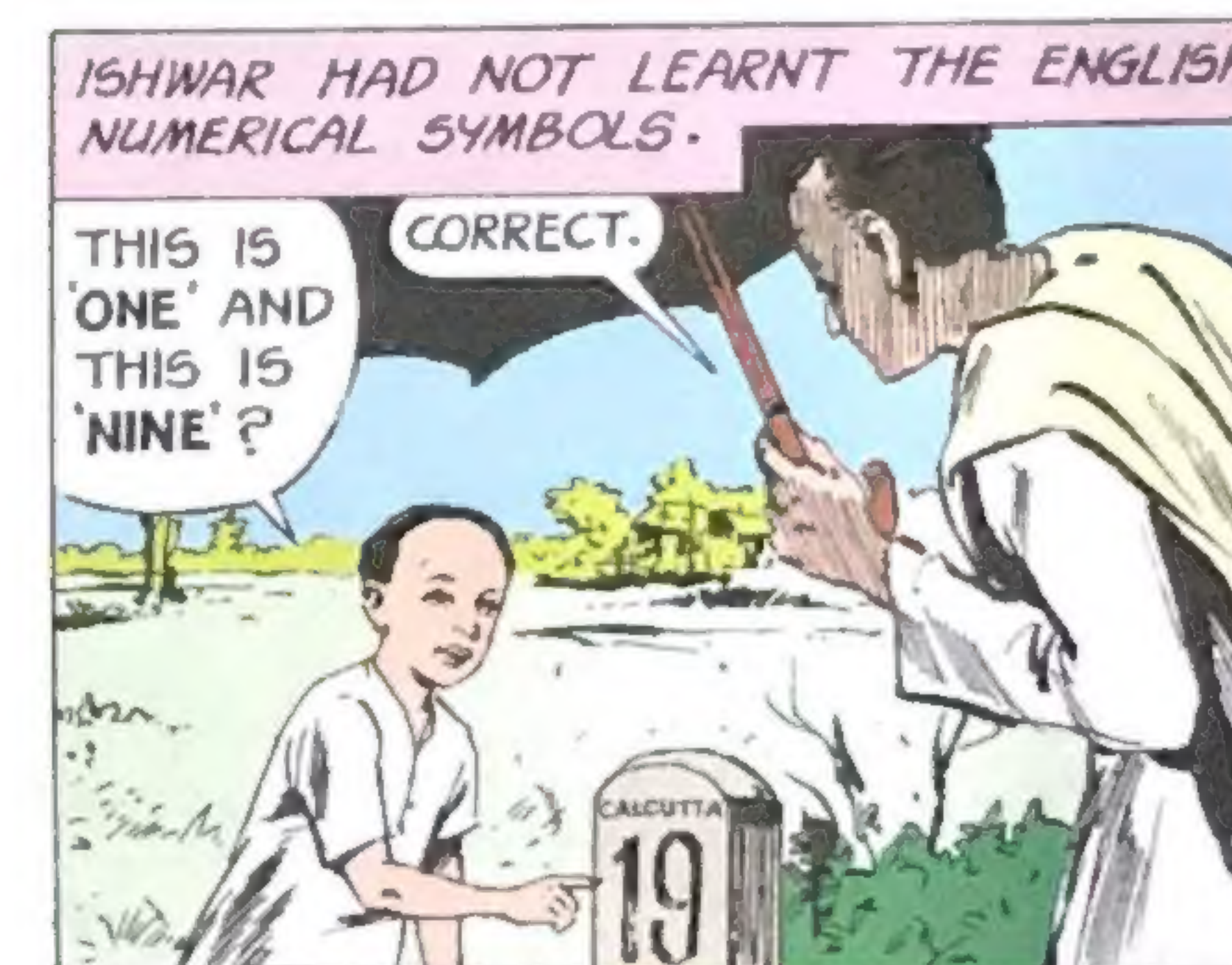
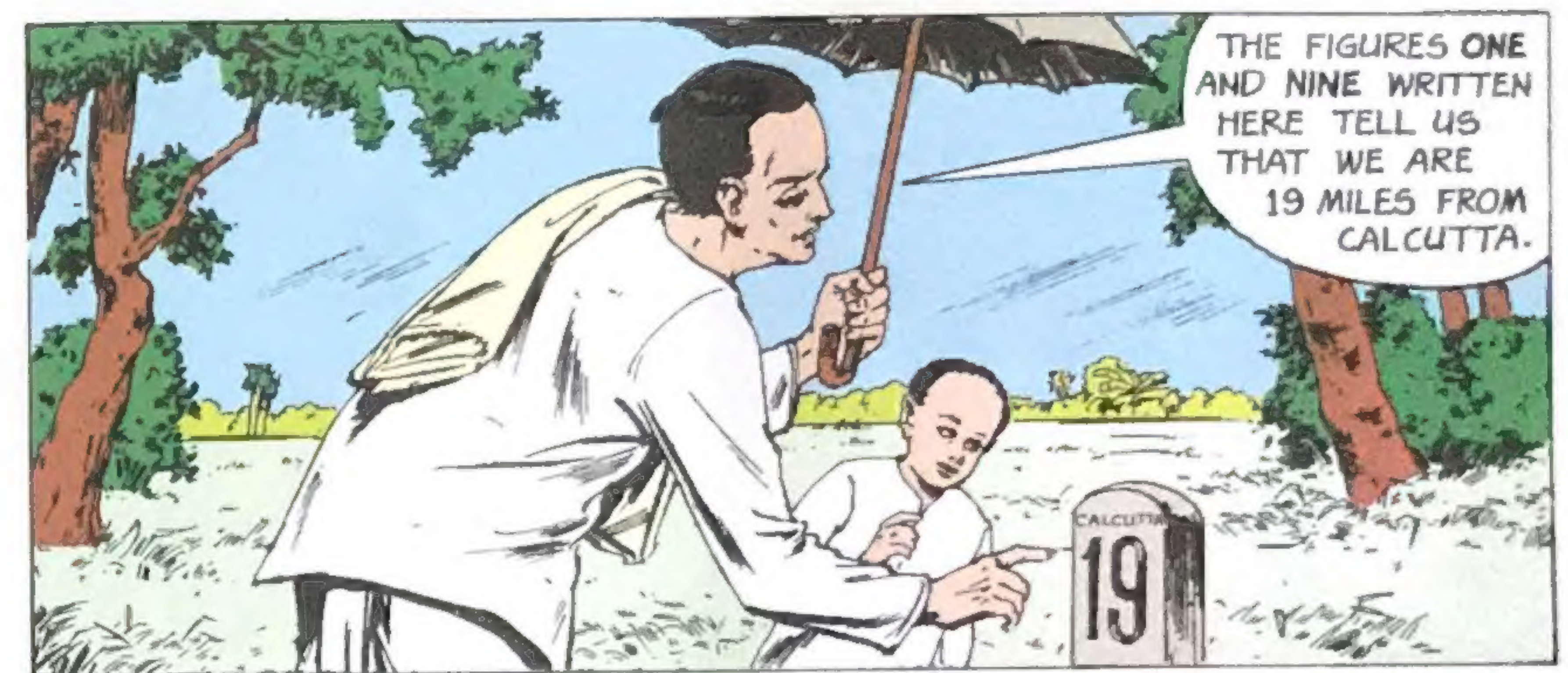
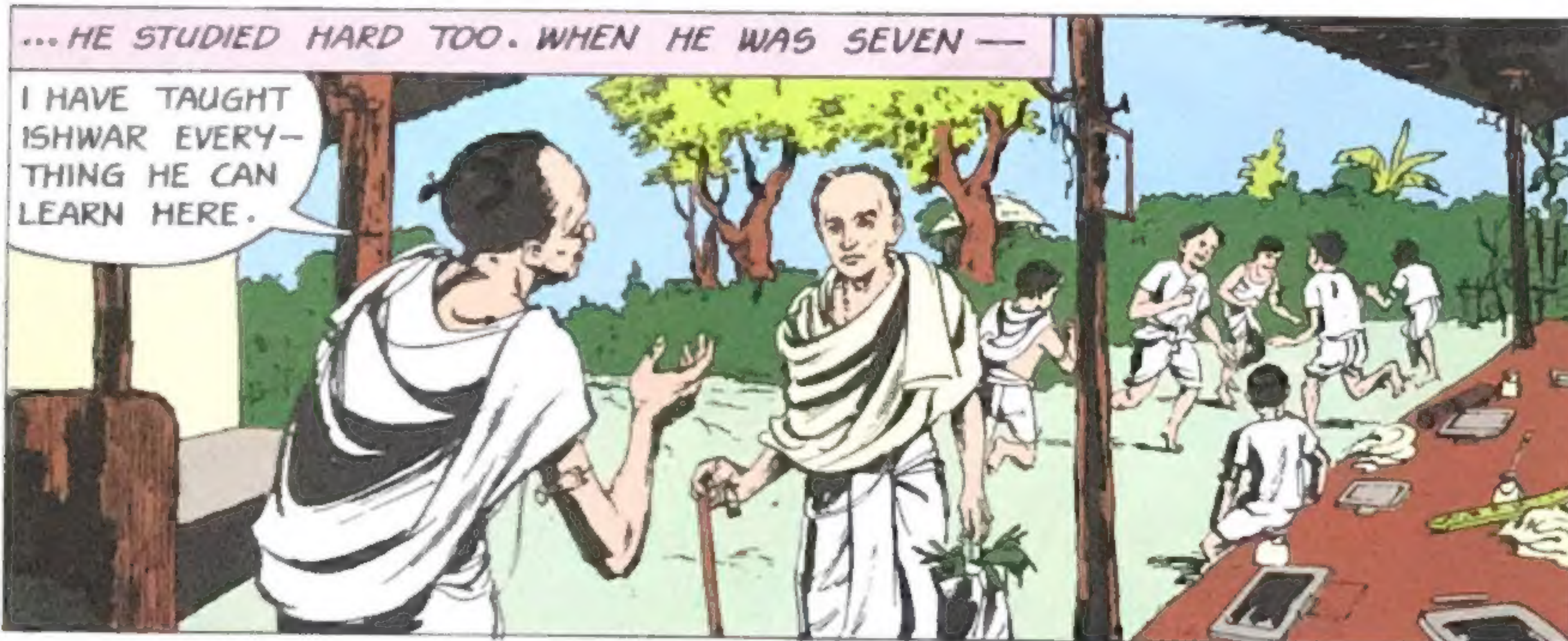
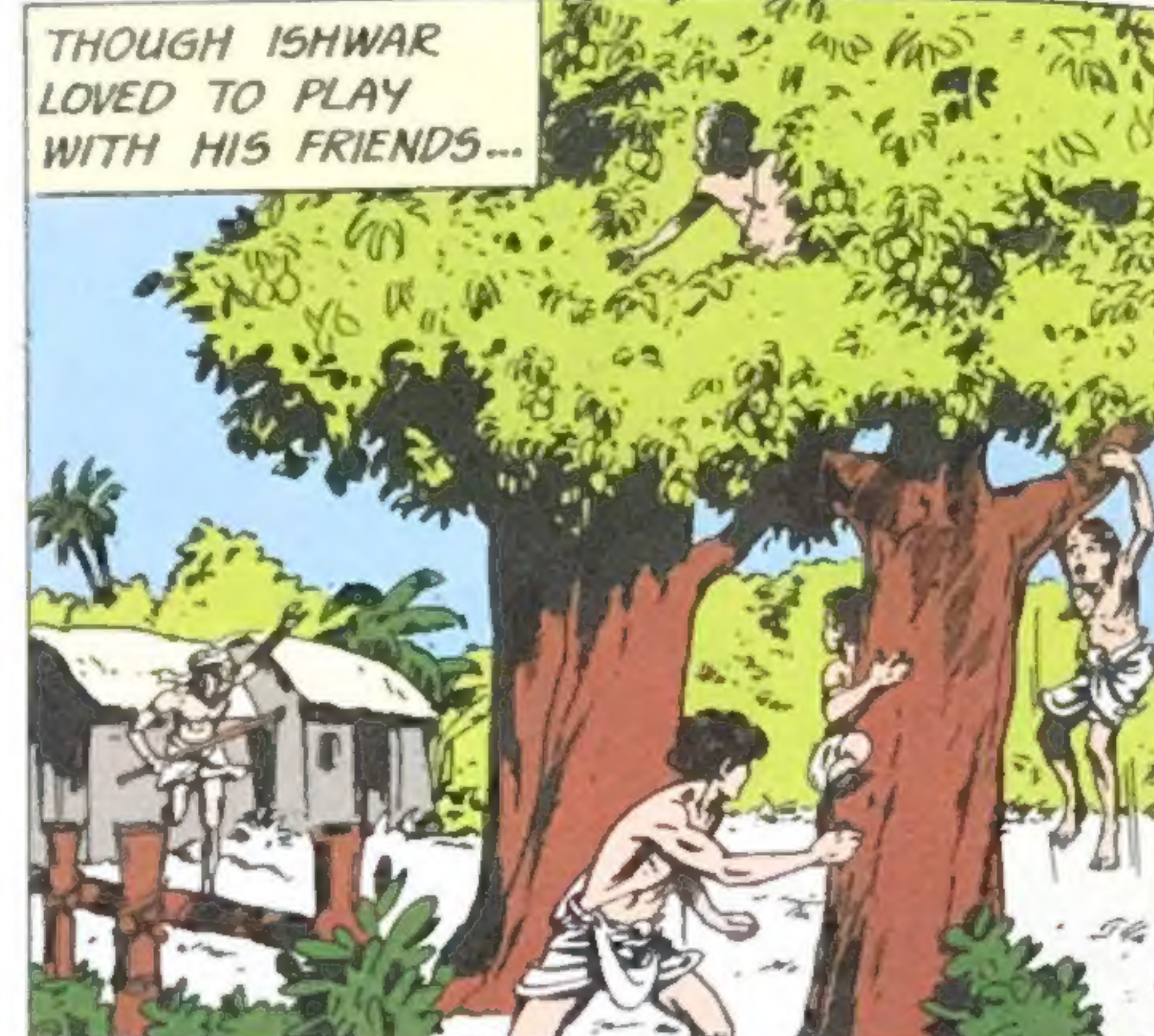


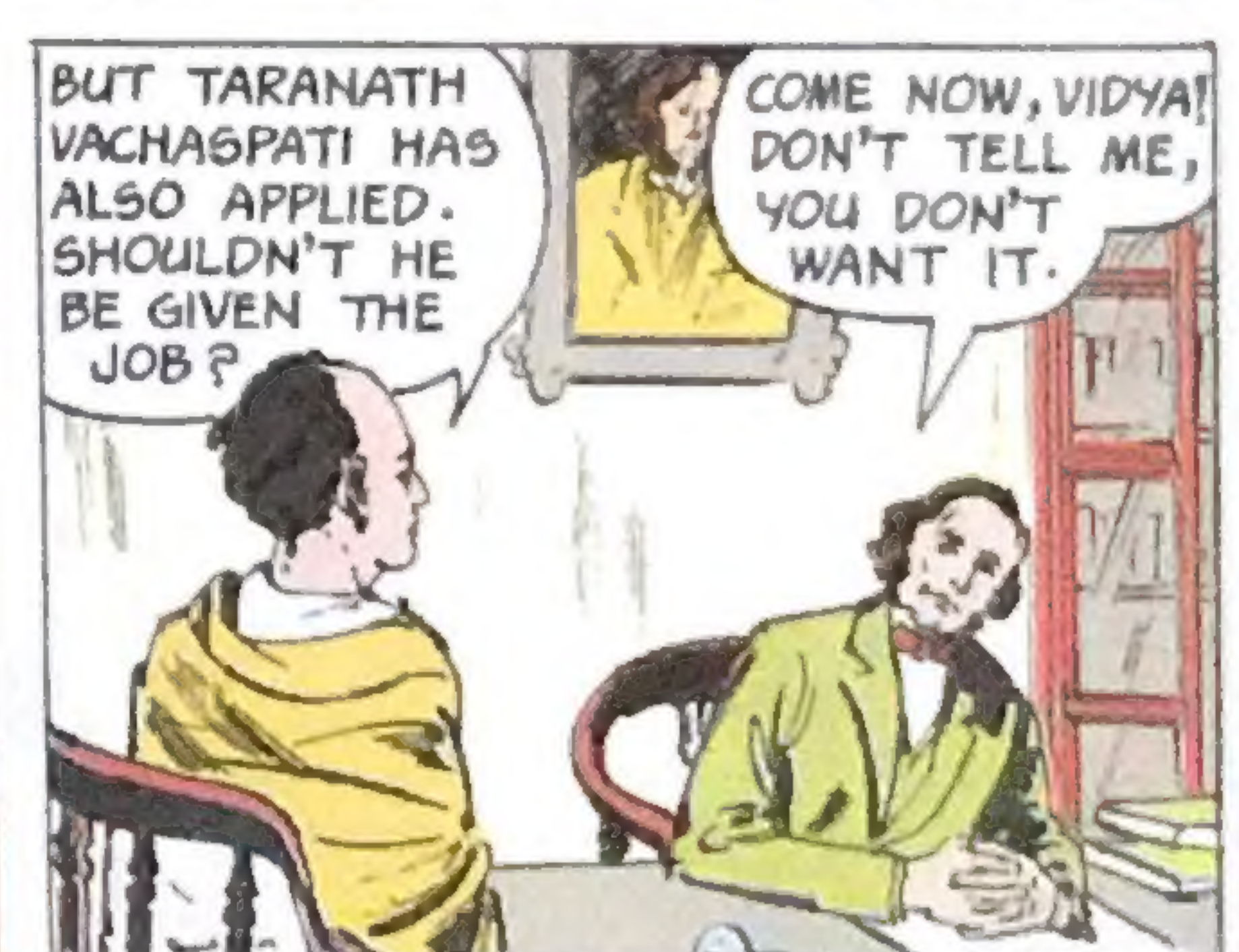
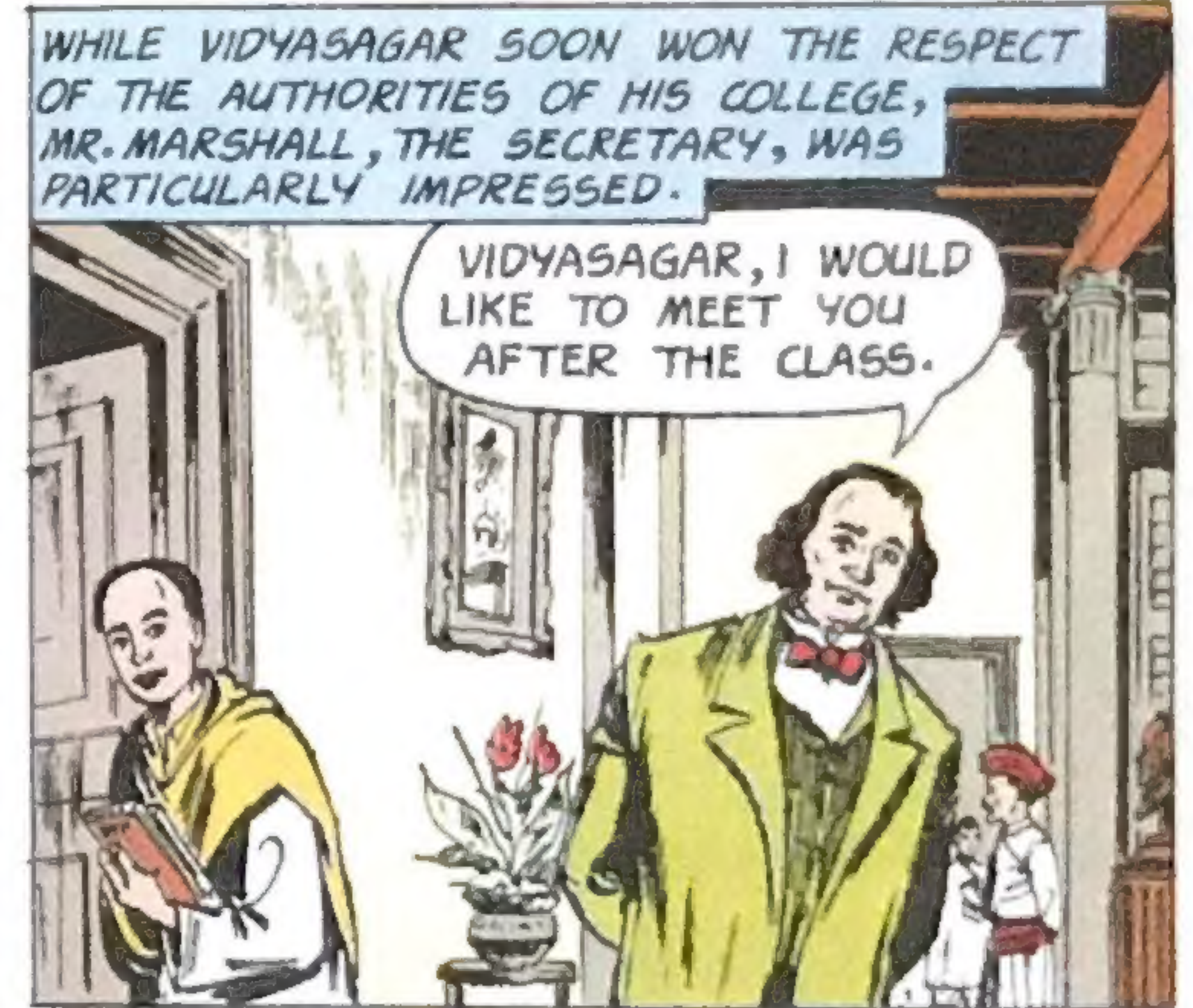
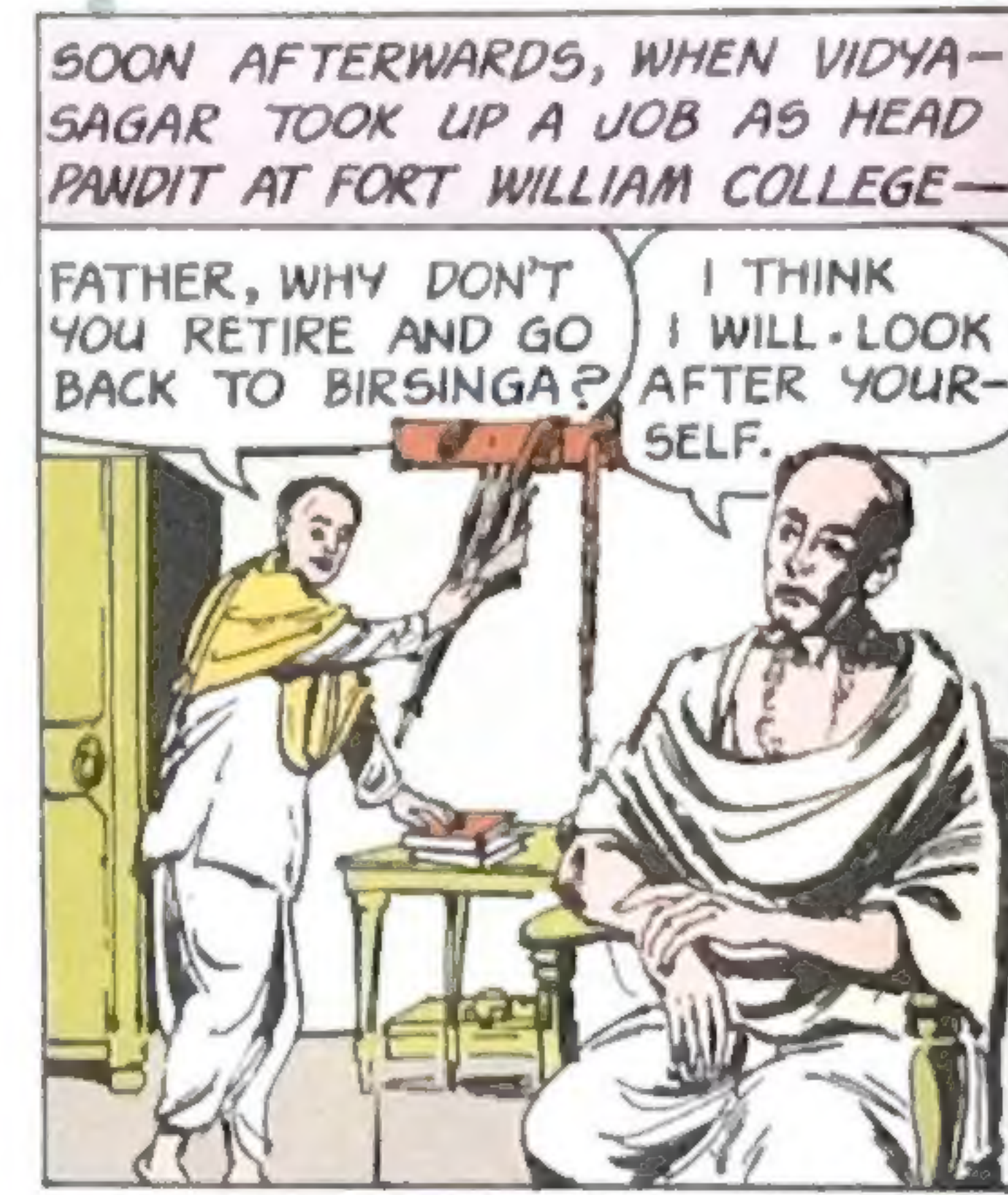
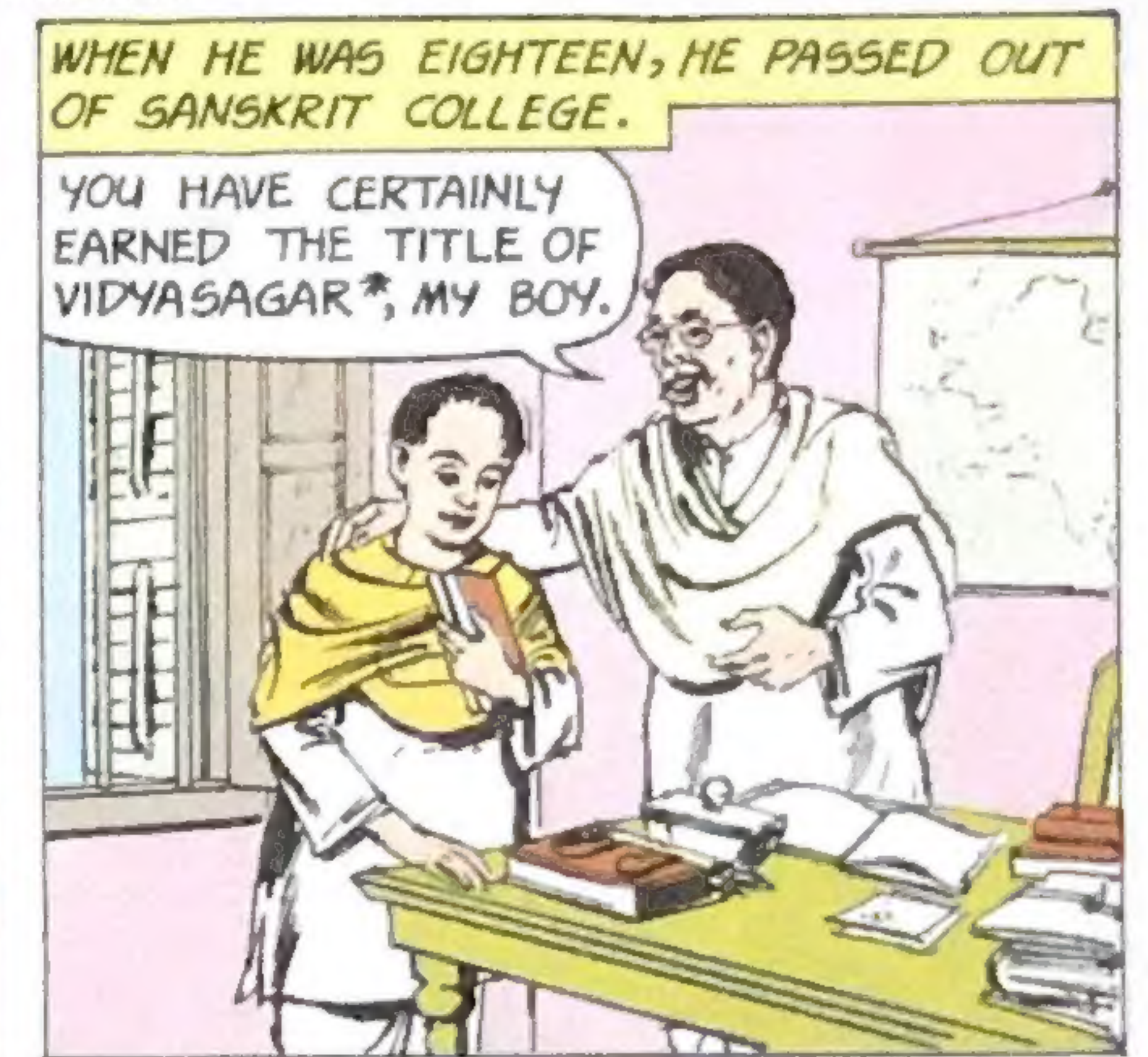
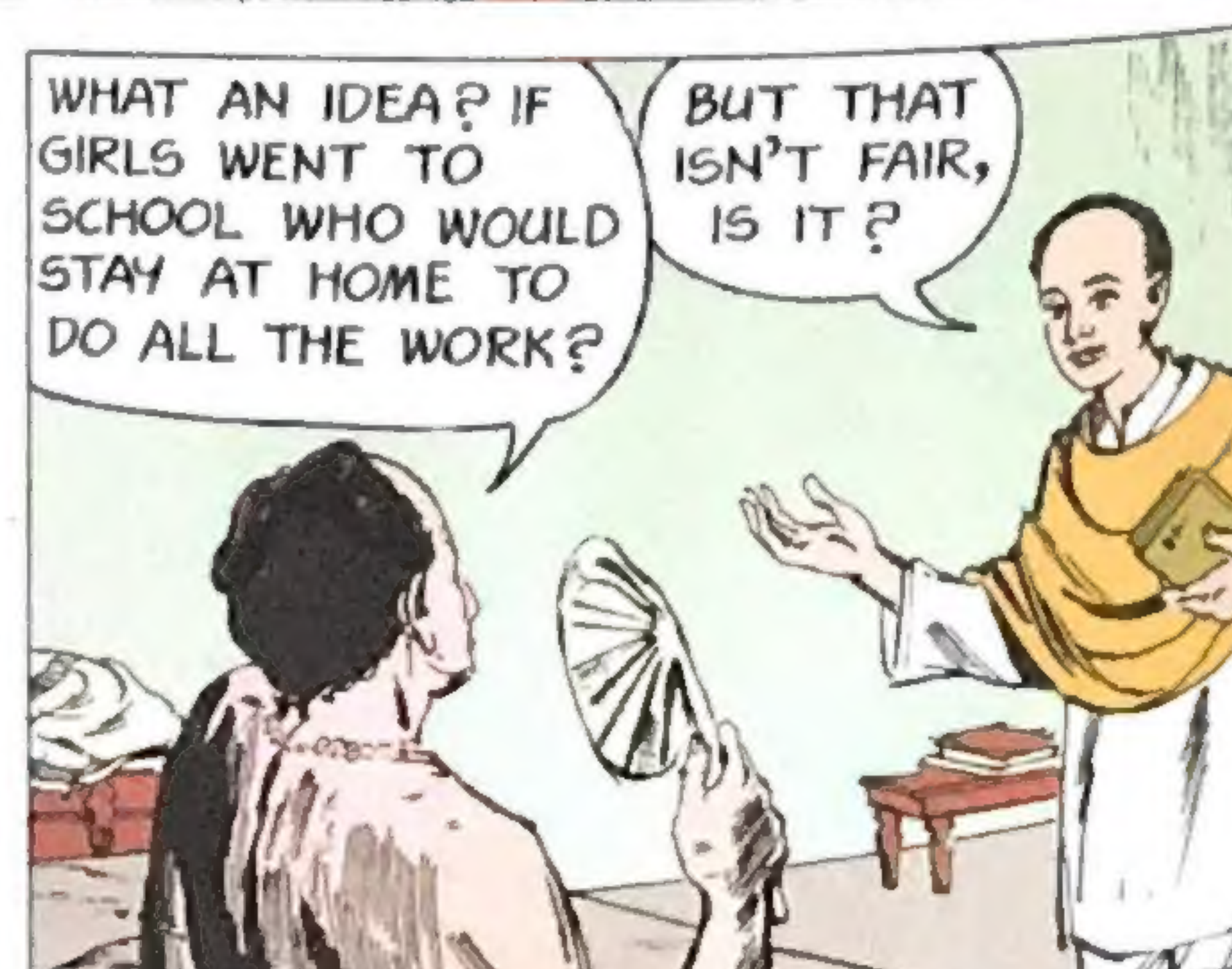
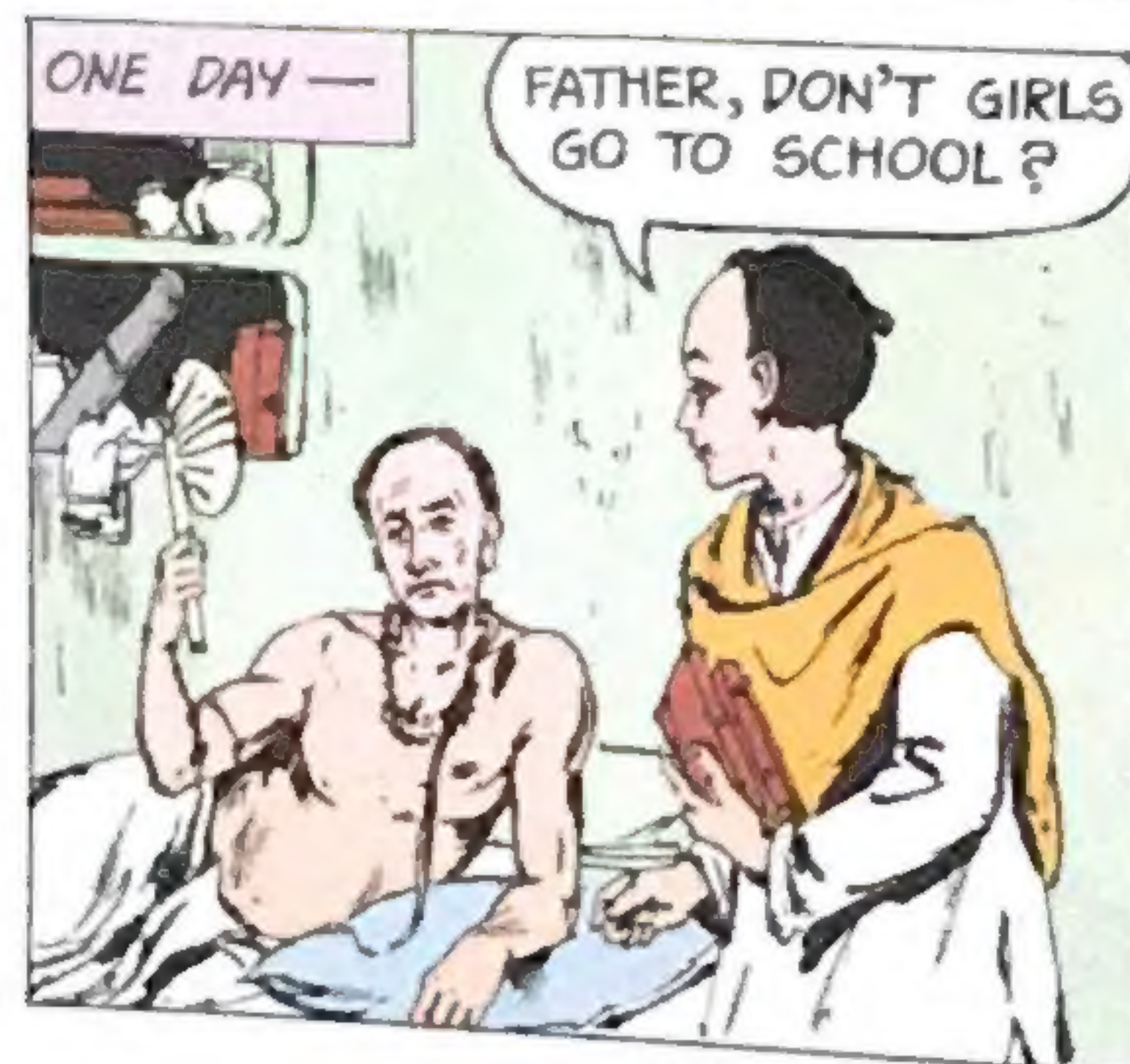
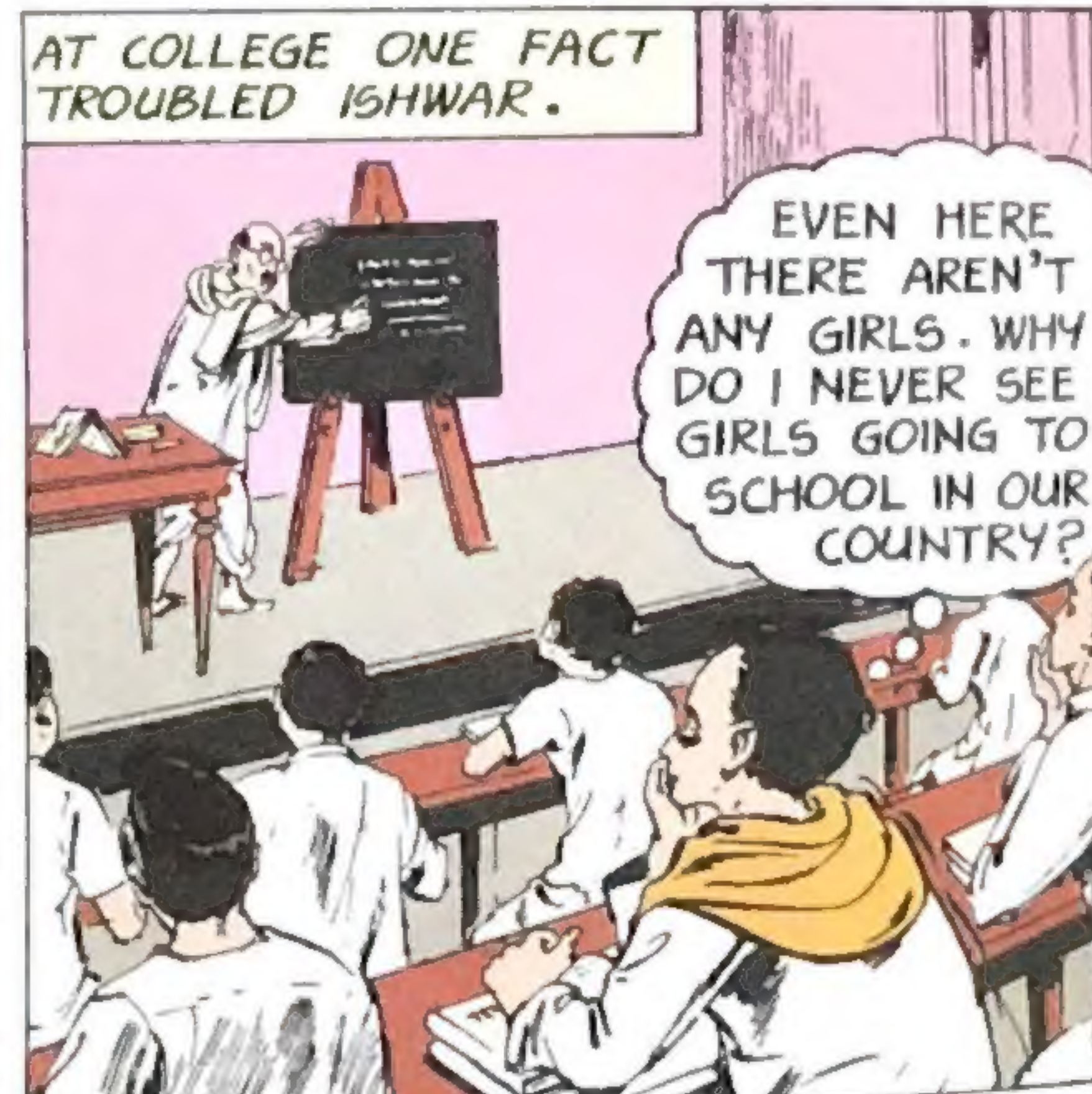
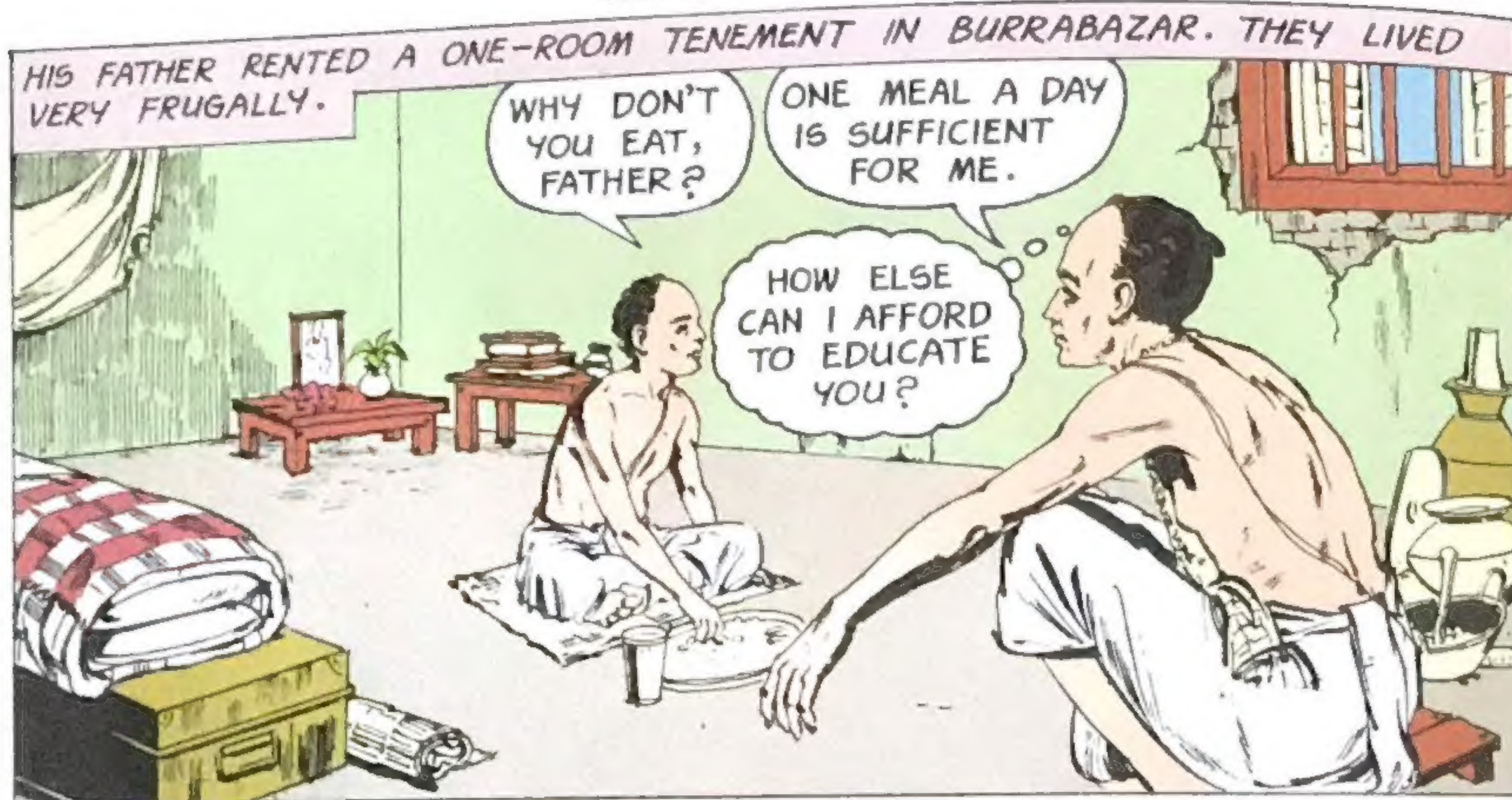
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ISHWAR CHANDRA VIDYASAGAR



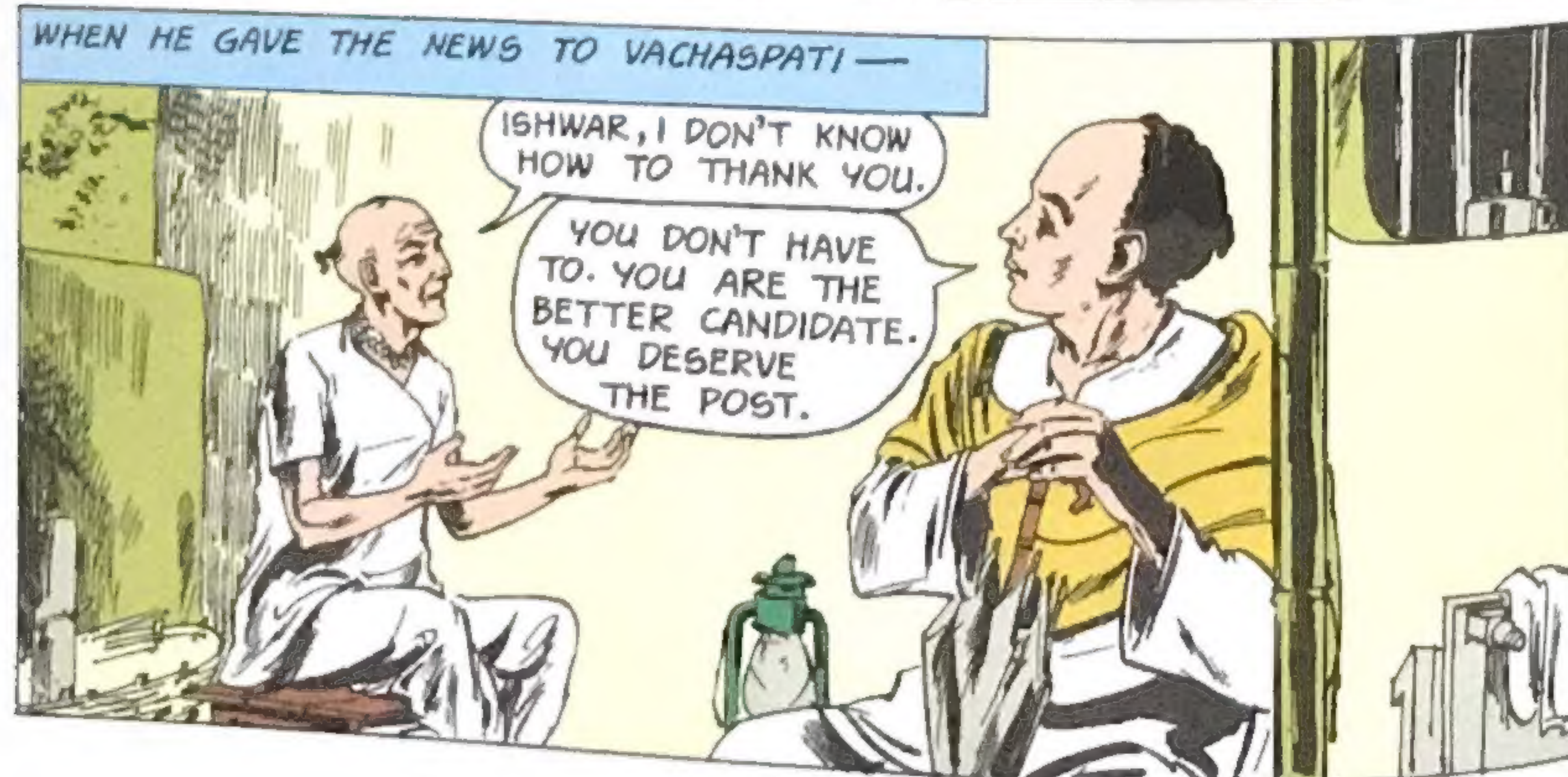
ISHWAR CHANDRA WAS THE SON OF A POOR BRAHMAN COUPLE OF
BIRSINGA, A TINY VILLAGE IN BENGAL.

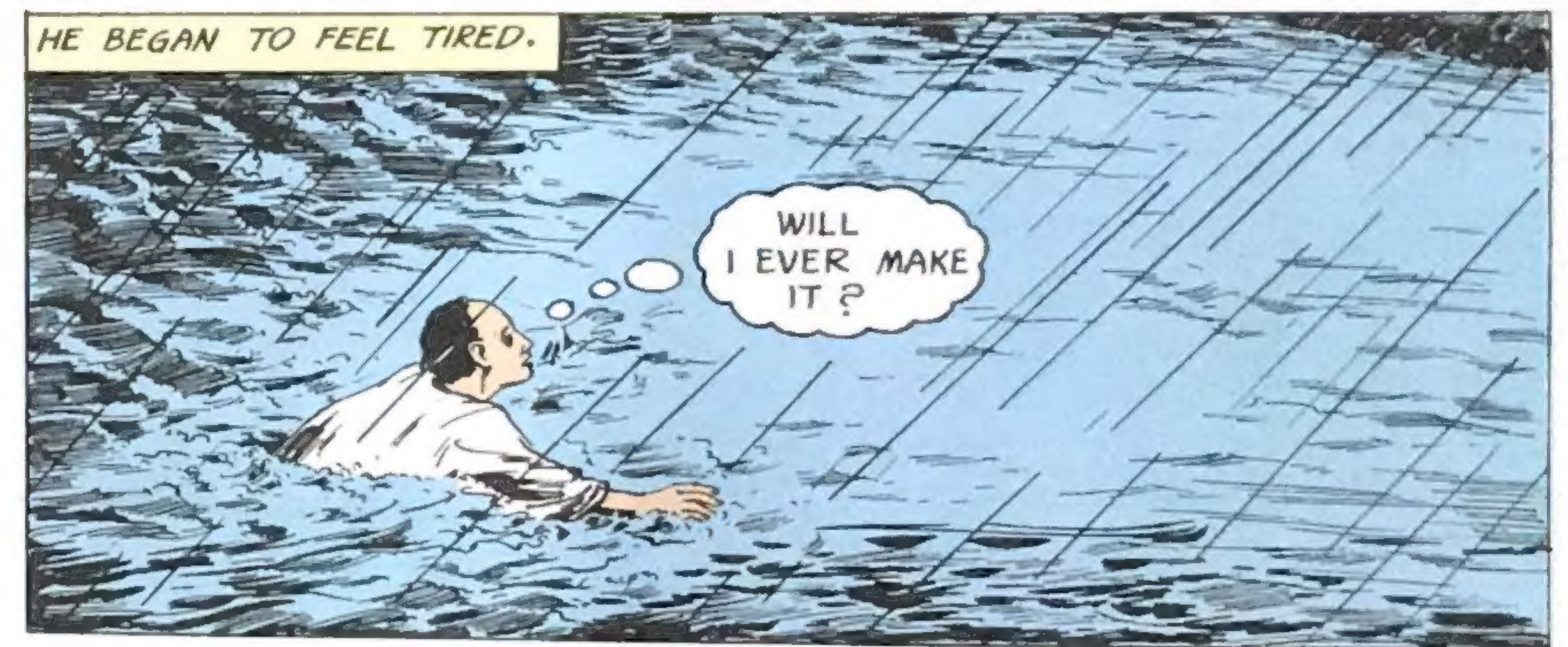
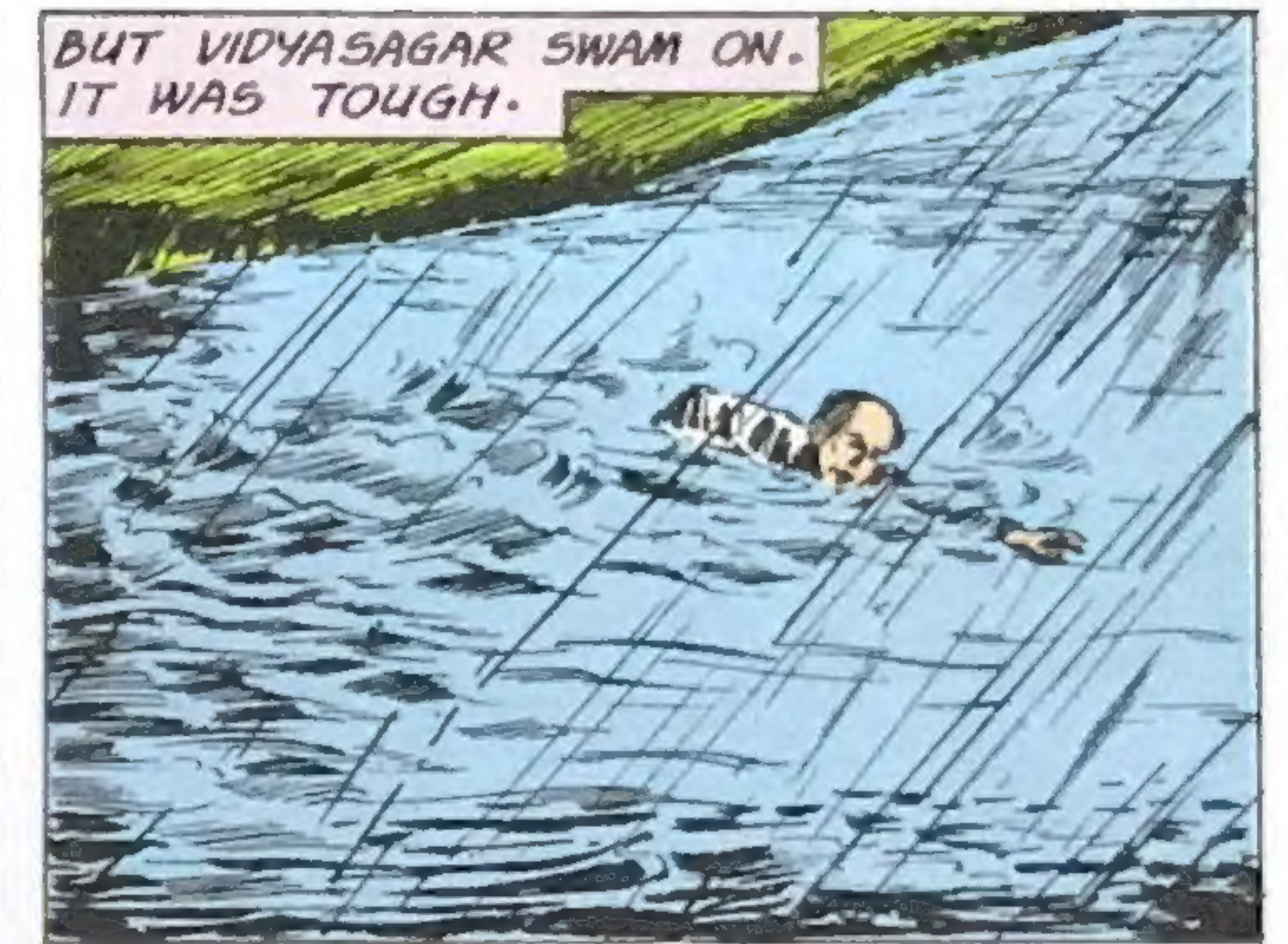
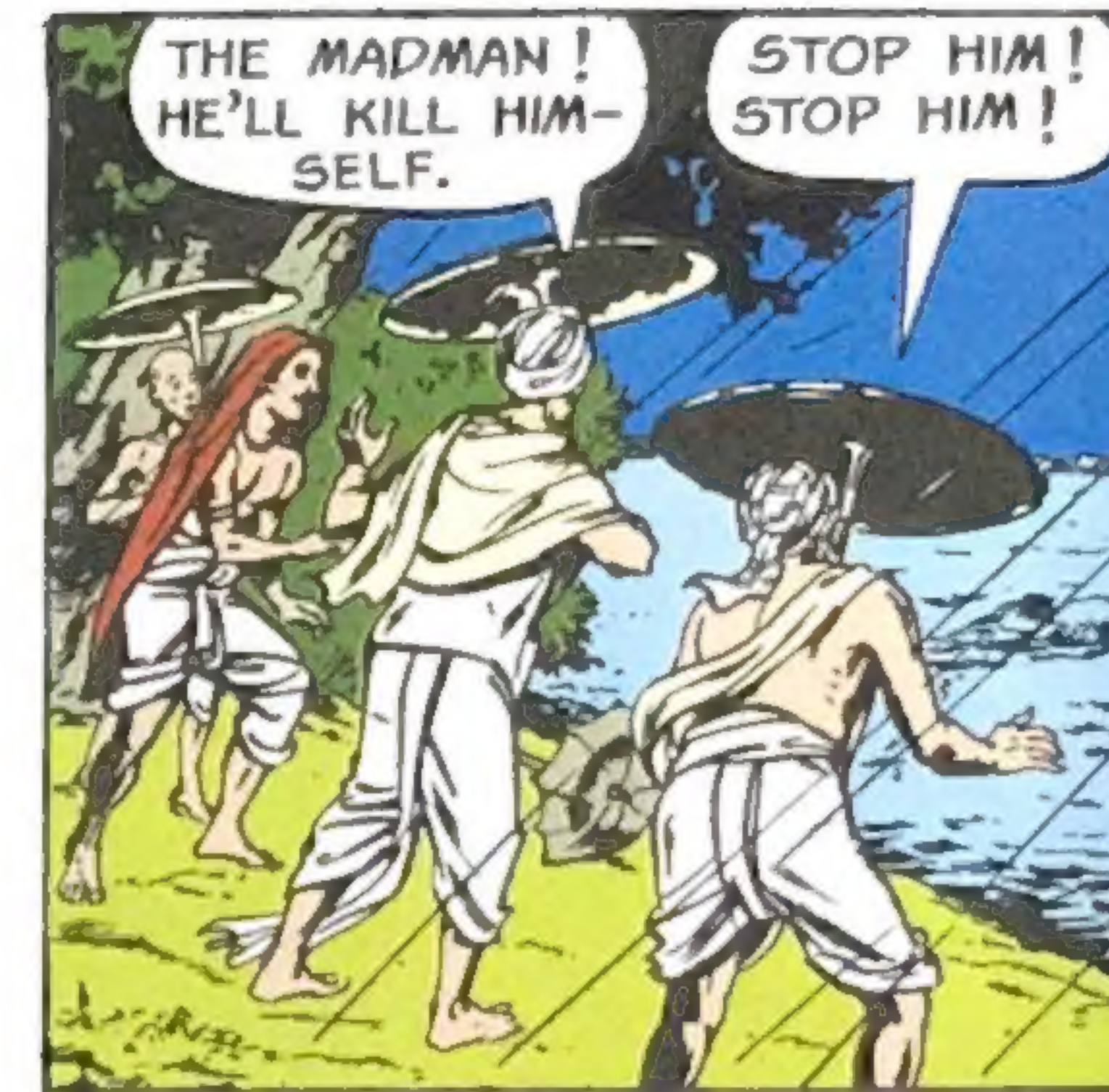
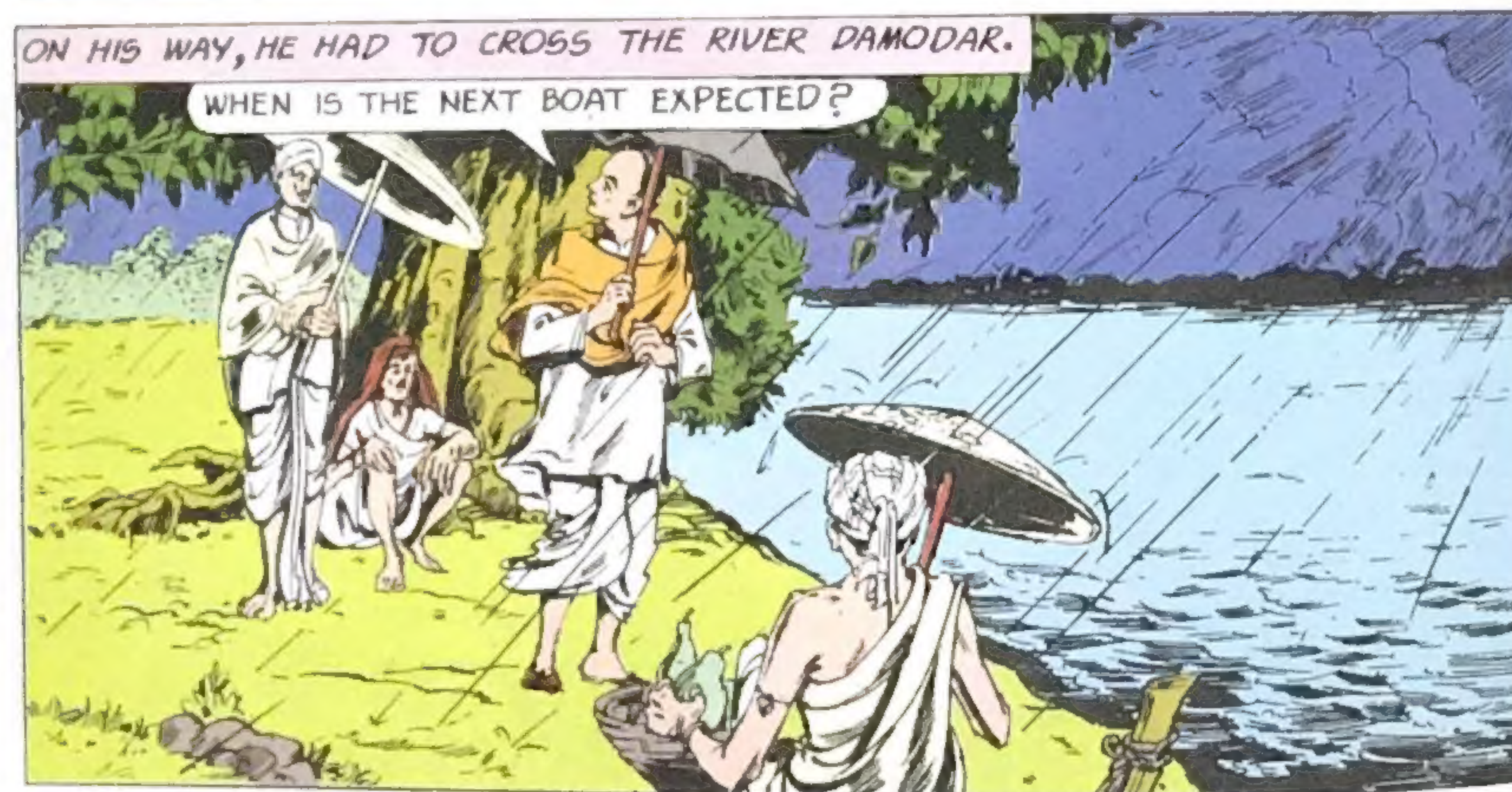






VIDYASAGAR SET OUT IMMEDIATELY ON FOOT. HE DID NOT HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO TRAVEL BY A CART. ON AND ON HE WALKED. NIGHT FELL BUT HE DID NOT STOP TO REST.





AFTER THE WEDDING, VIDYASAGAR RETURNED TO CALCUTTA.



THERE IS ANOTHER VACANCY AT SANSKRIT COLLEGE. WILL YOU ACCEPT THE JOB?

THANK YOU, MR. MARSHALL. I WILL.

HE WORKED HARD AT HIS JOB.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING SO LATE AT NIGHT?

OH, NOTHING. JUST PREPARING A REPORT FOR THE GENERAL IMPROVEMENT OF THE COLLEGE.



WHEN COPIES OF THE REPORT REACHED THE AUTHORITIES —

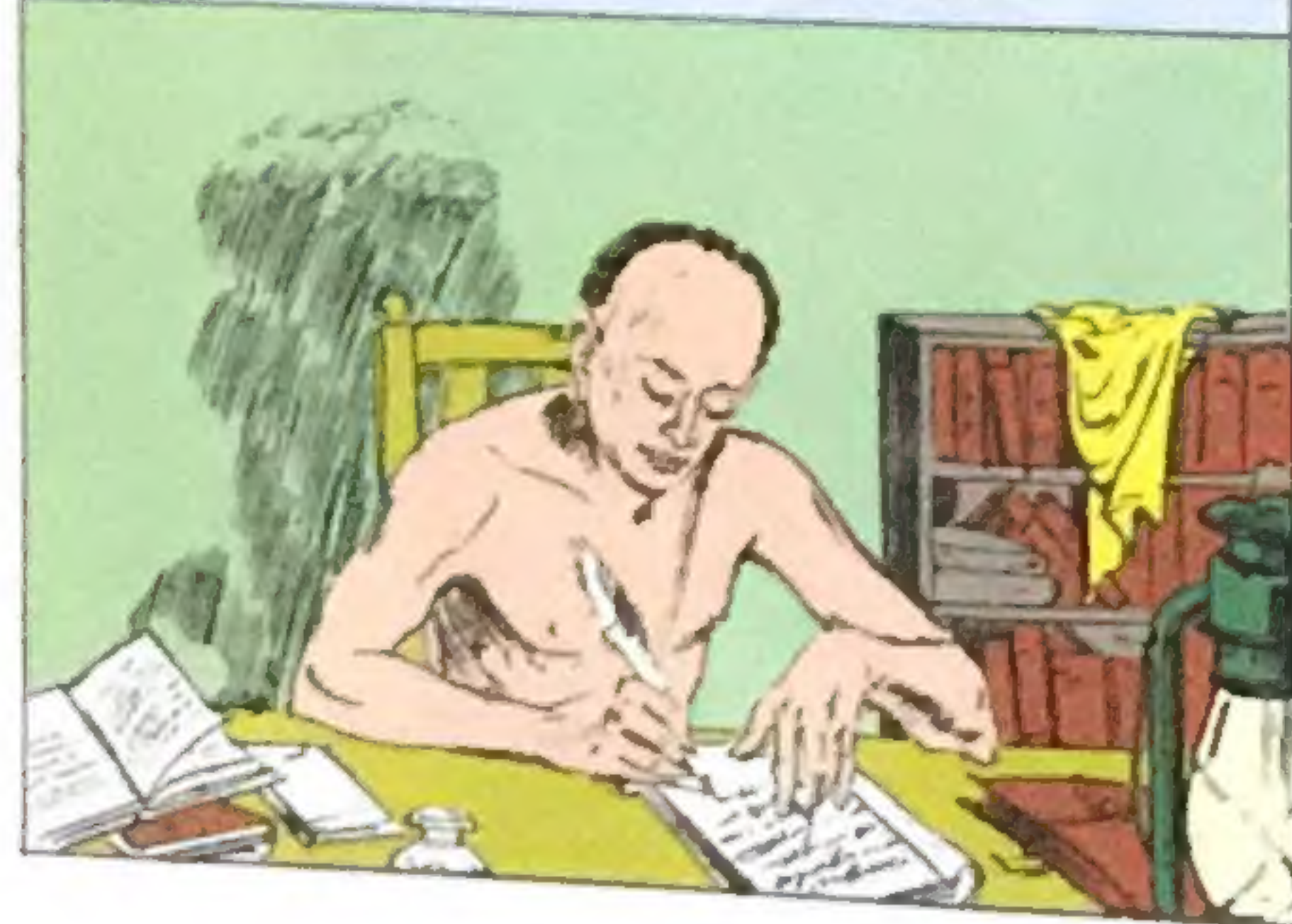


BRILLIANT!

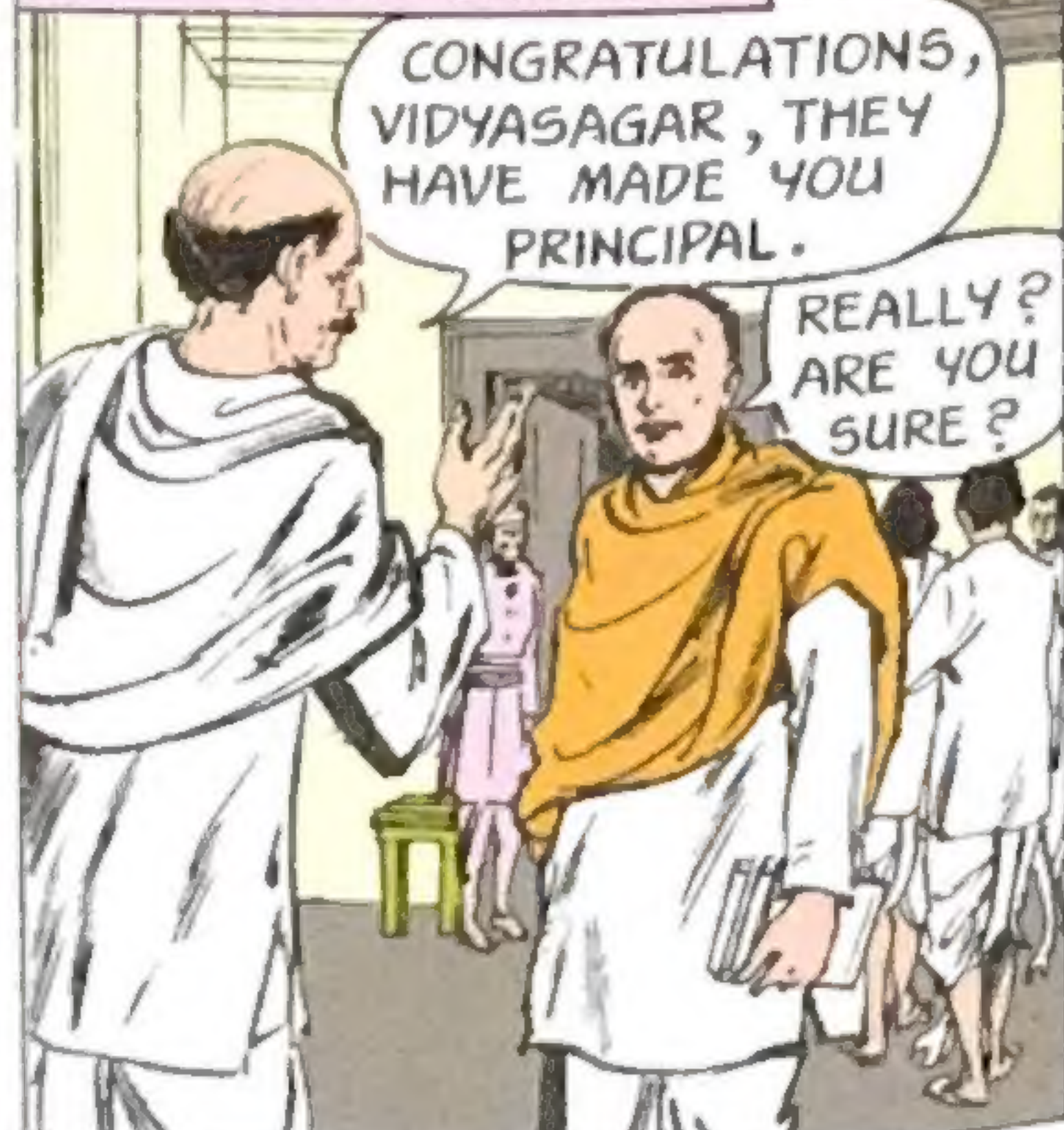
SUCH ORIGINAL IDEAS!

THE MAN SHOULD BE MADE PRINCIPAL.

VIDYASAGAR WAS UNAWARE OF THE PLANS THE AUTHORITIES HAD FOR HIM. HE HAD ALWAYS WANTED TO BECOME A WRITER. AND 1847 SAW HIS FIRST PUBLISHED BOOK, "VETALA PANCHAVIMSHATI".



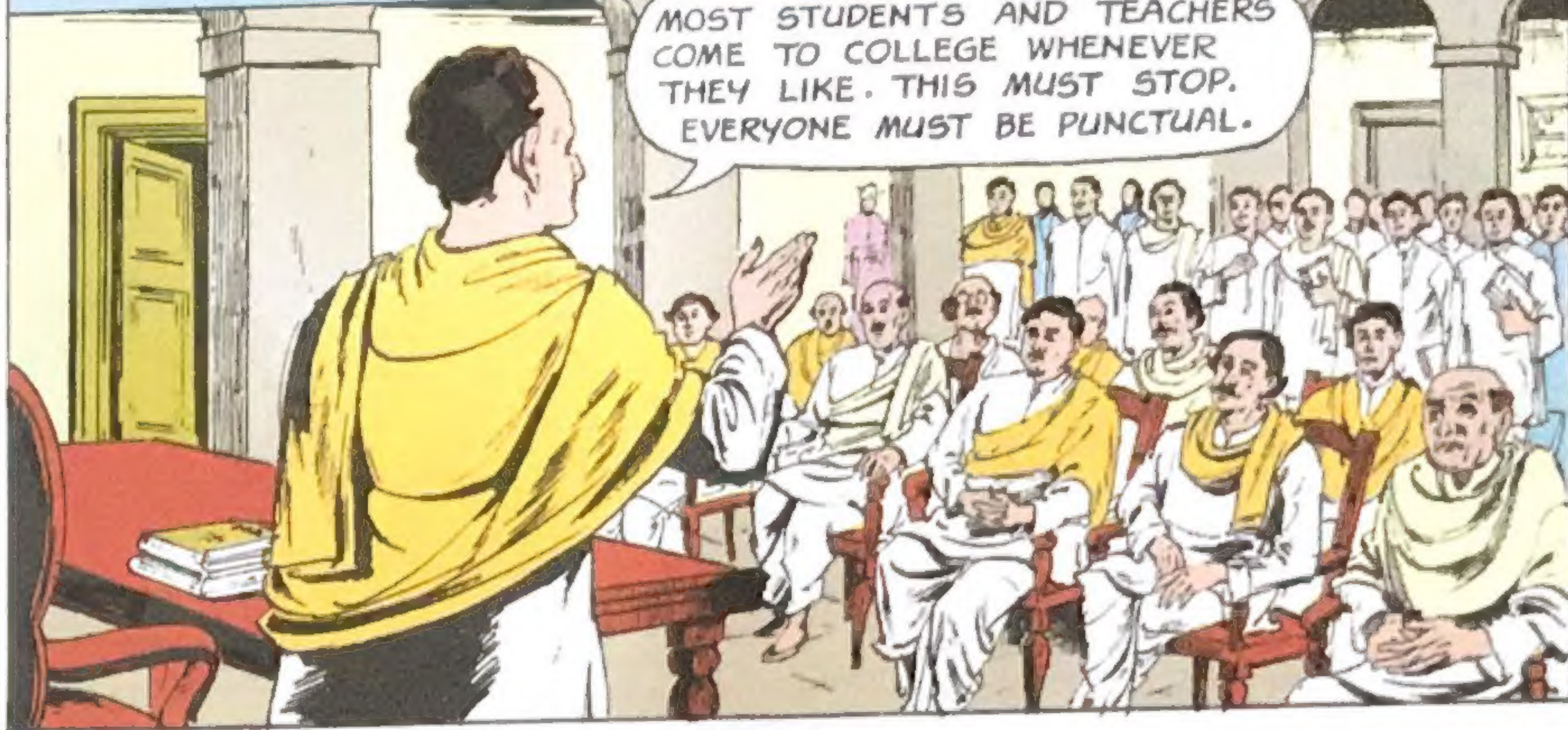
A FEW DAYS LATER —



CONGRATULATIONS, VIDYASAGAR, THEY HAVE MADE YOU PRINCIPAL.

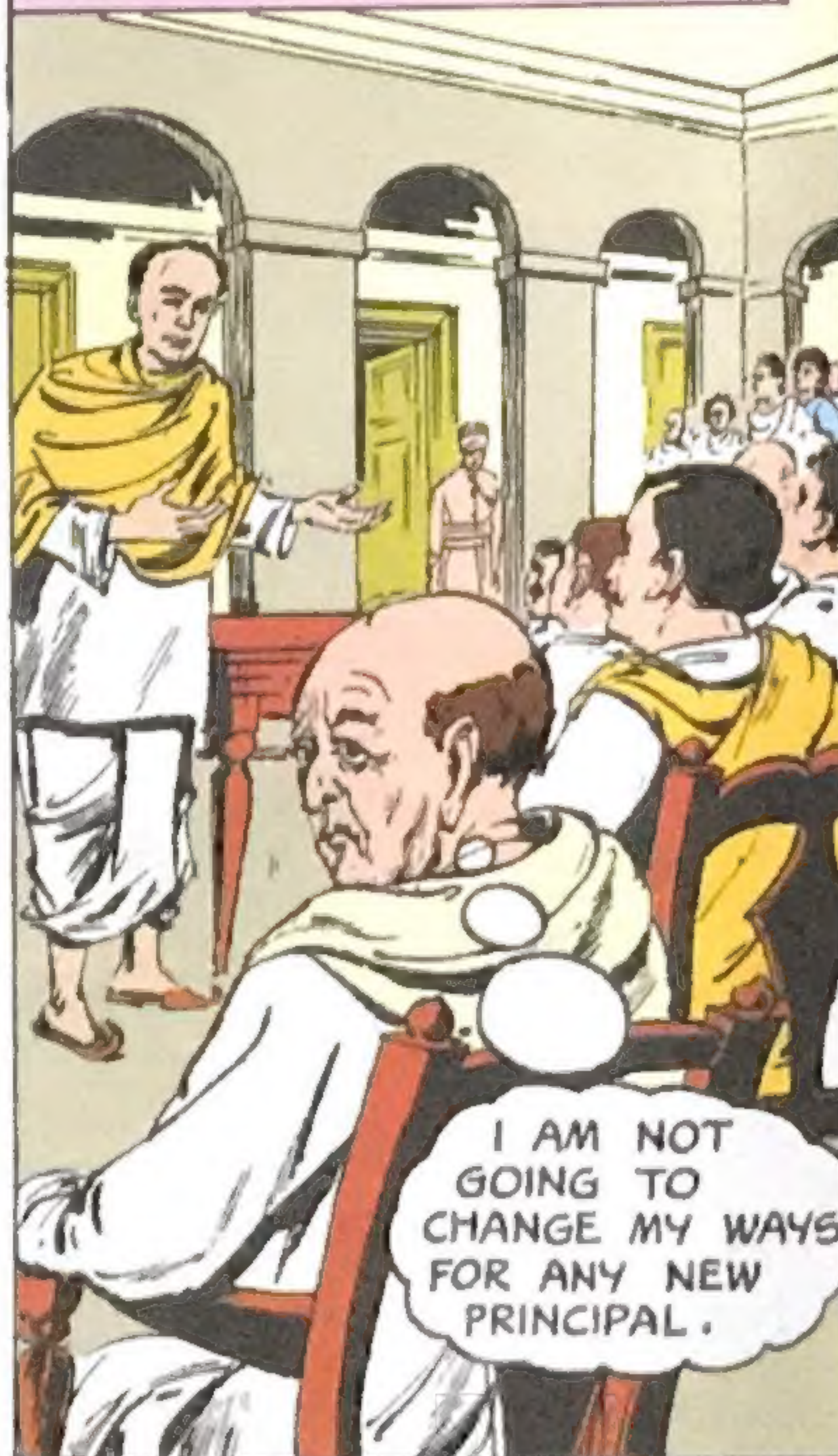
REALLY? ARE YOU SURE?

HIS FIRST ACT AS PRINCIPAL WAS TO ENFORCE DISCIPLINE.



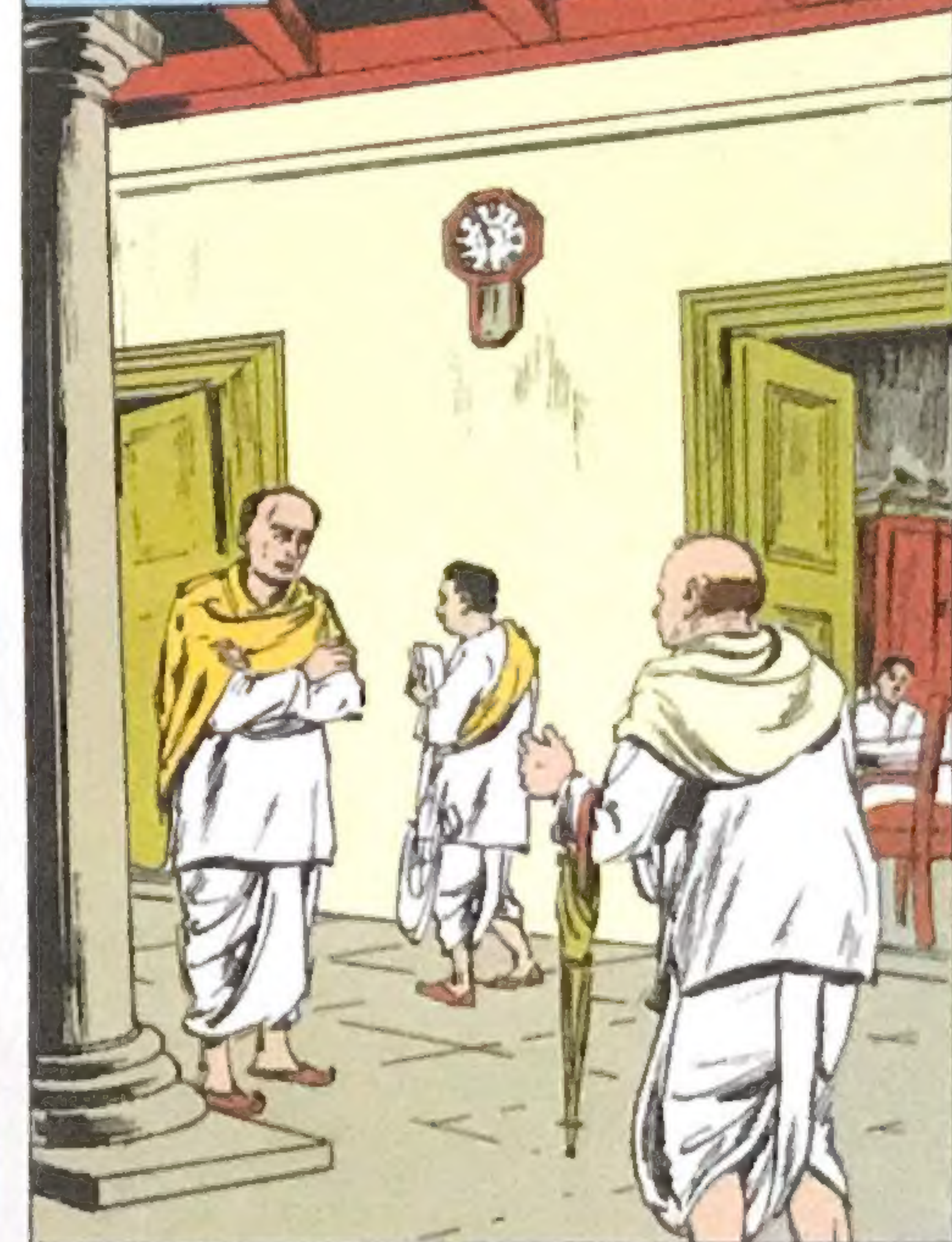
MOST STUDENTS AND TEACHERS COME TO COLLEGE WHENEVER THEY LIKE. THIS MUST STOP. EVERYONE MUST BE PUNCTUAL.

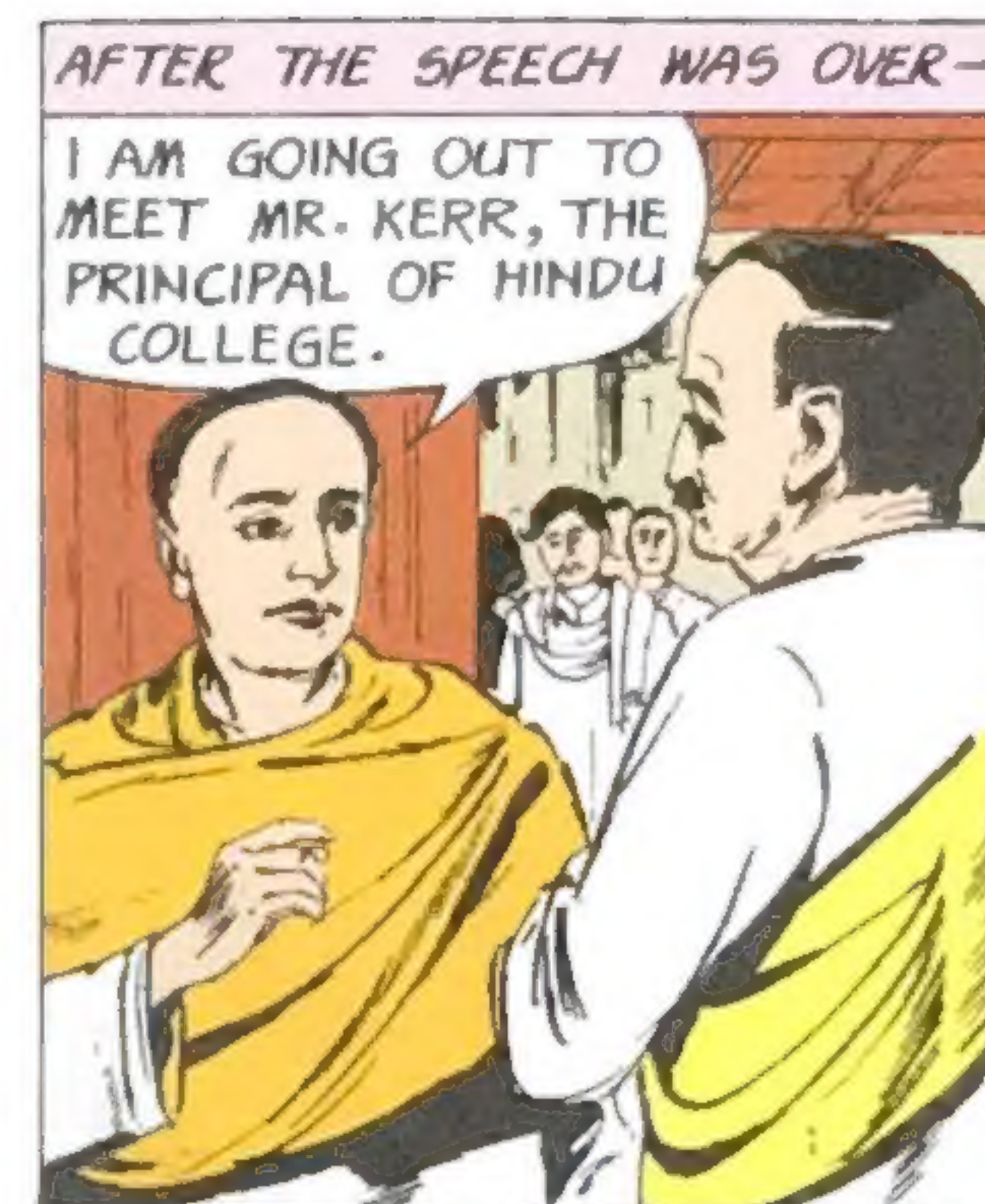
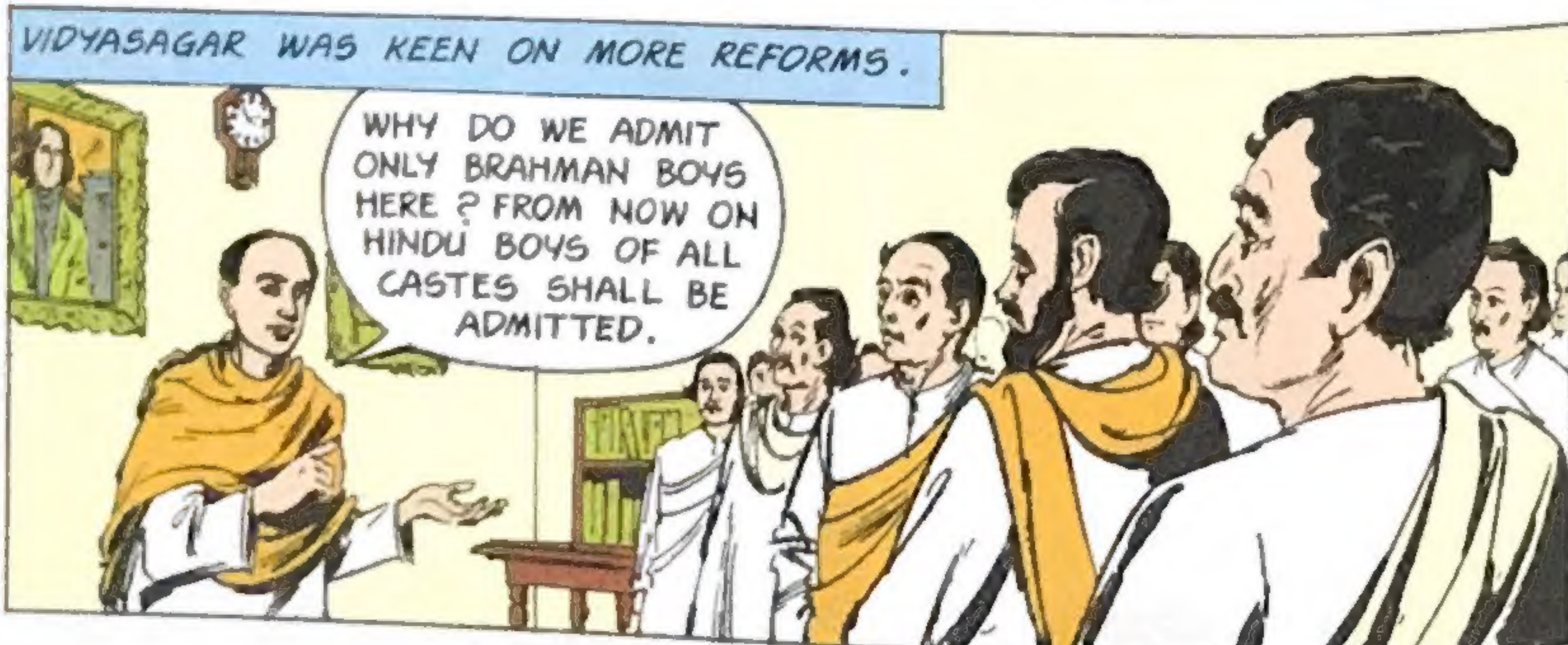
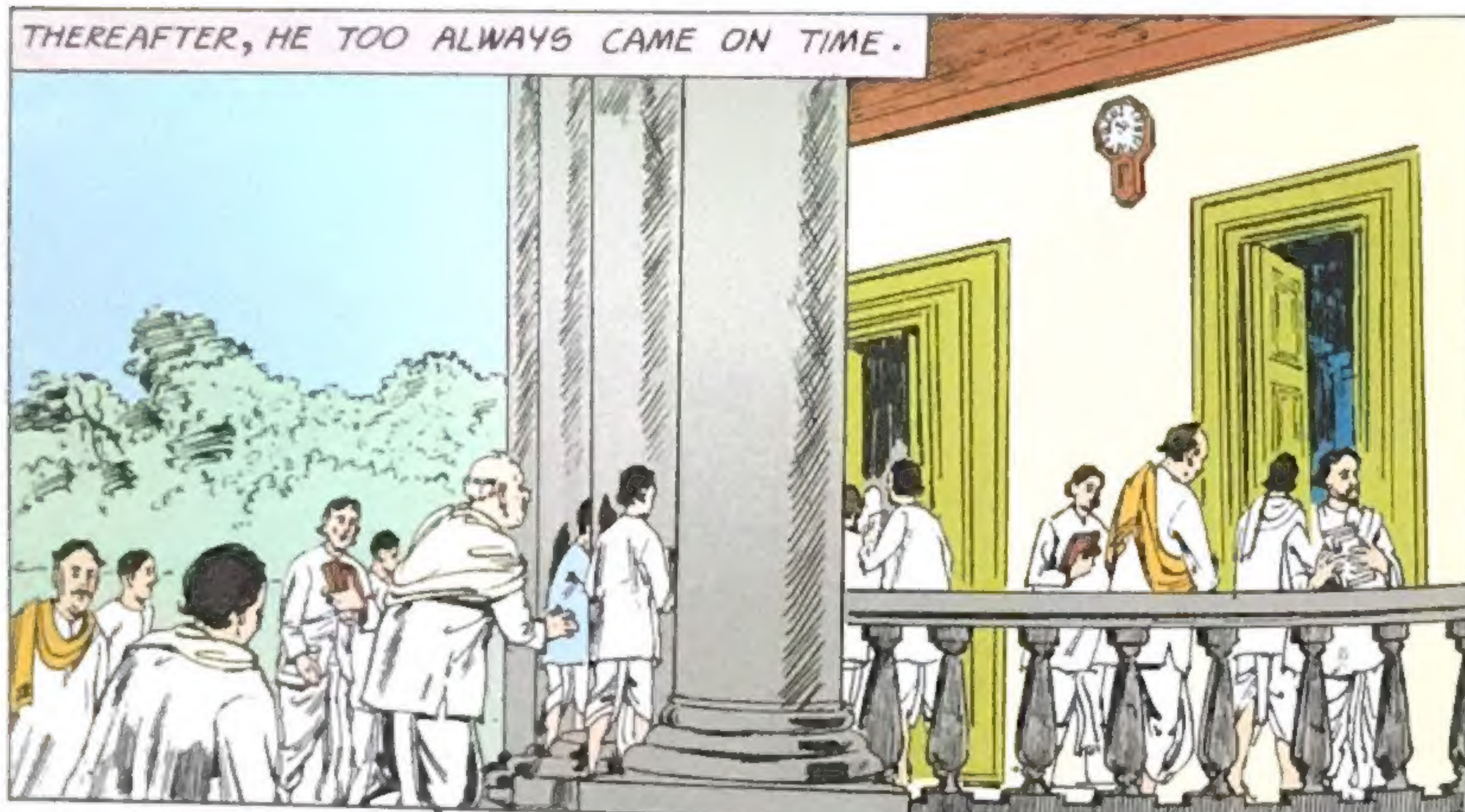
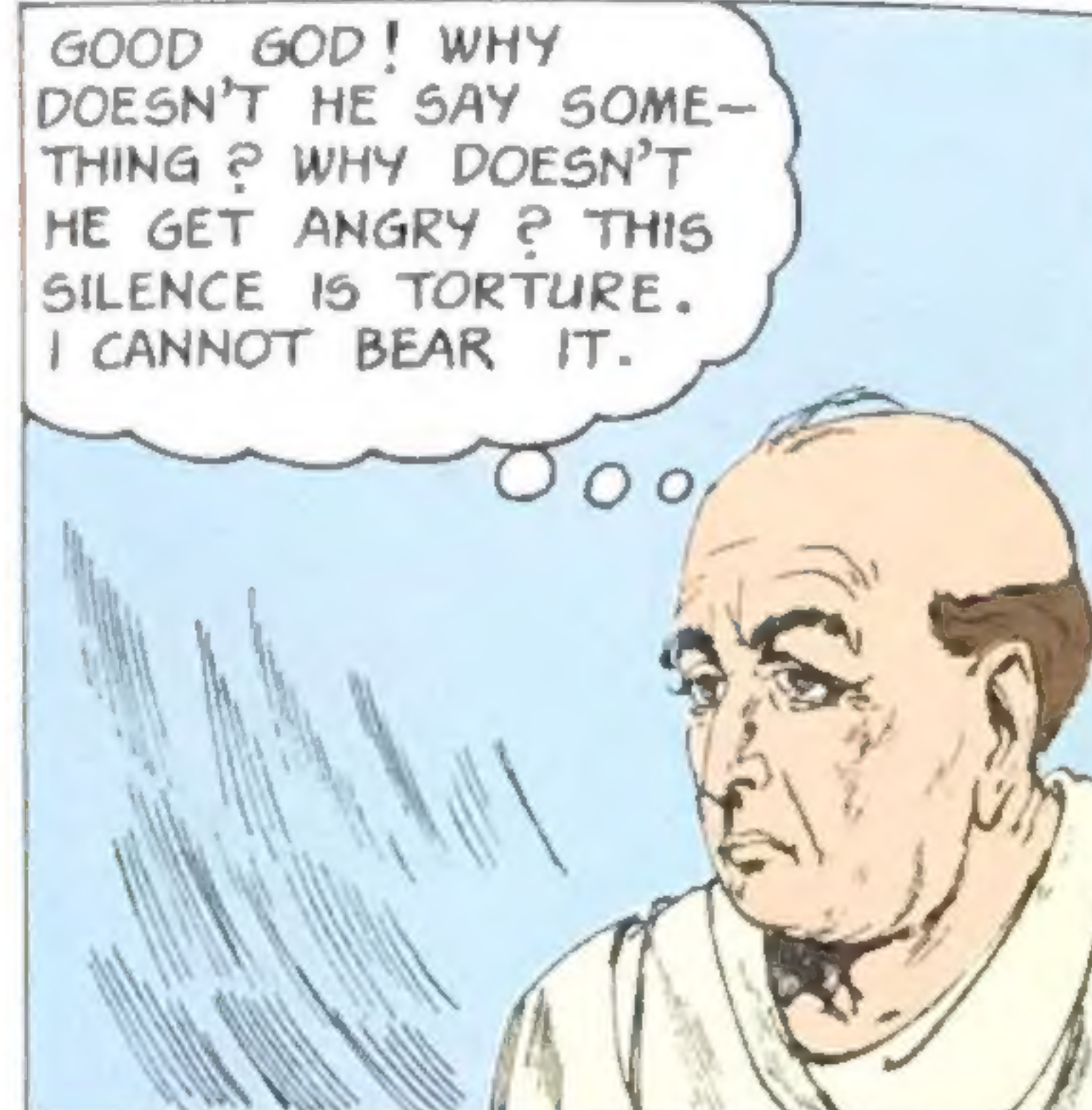
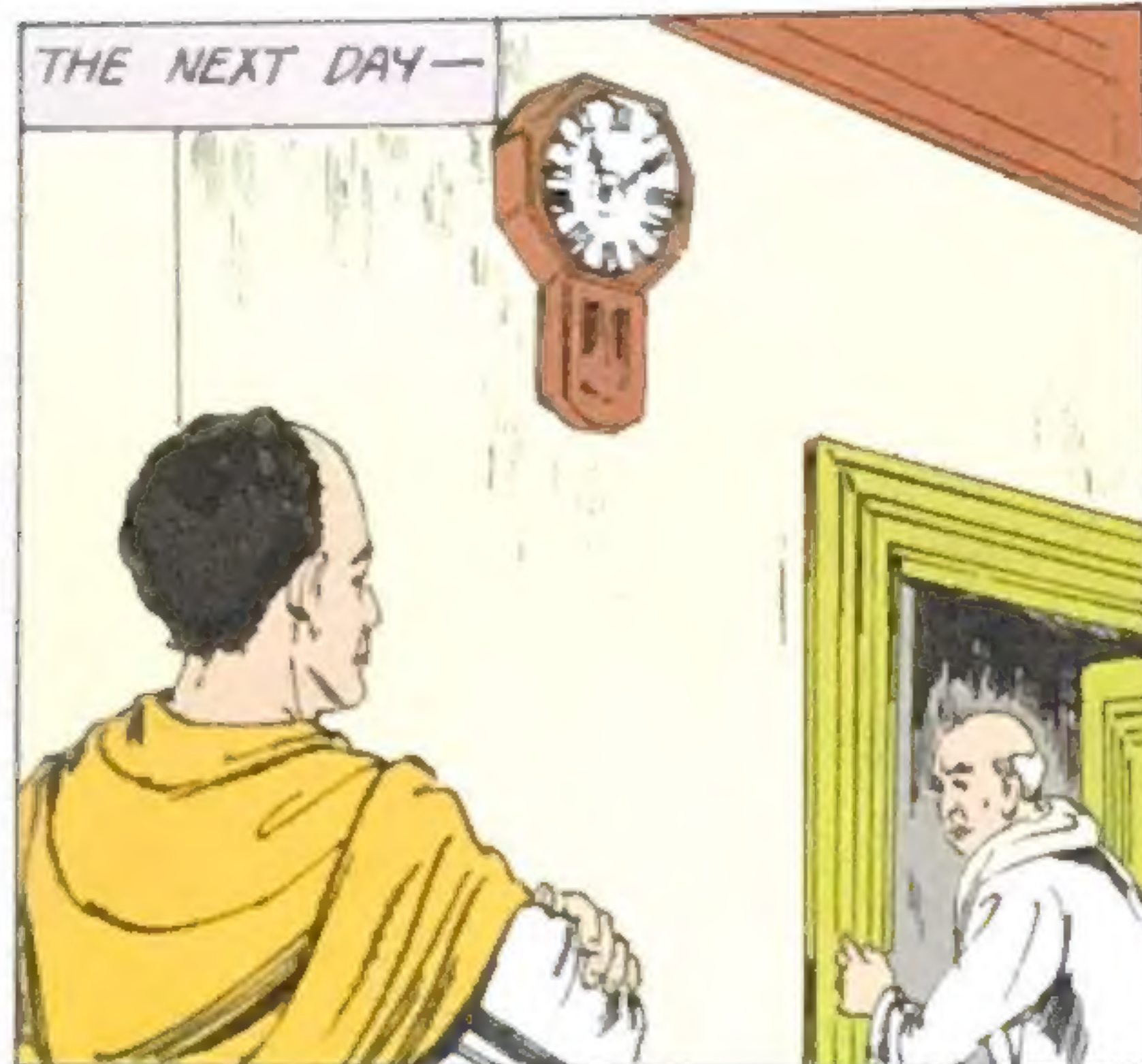
ALL IN THE ASSEMBLY WERE IMPRESSED BY HIS ZEAL. ALL EXCEPT AN OLD TEACHER.



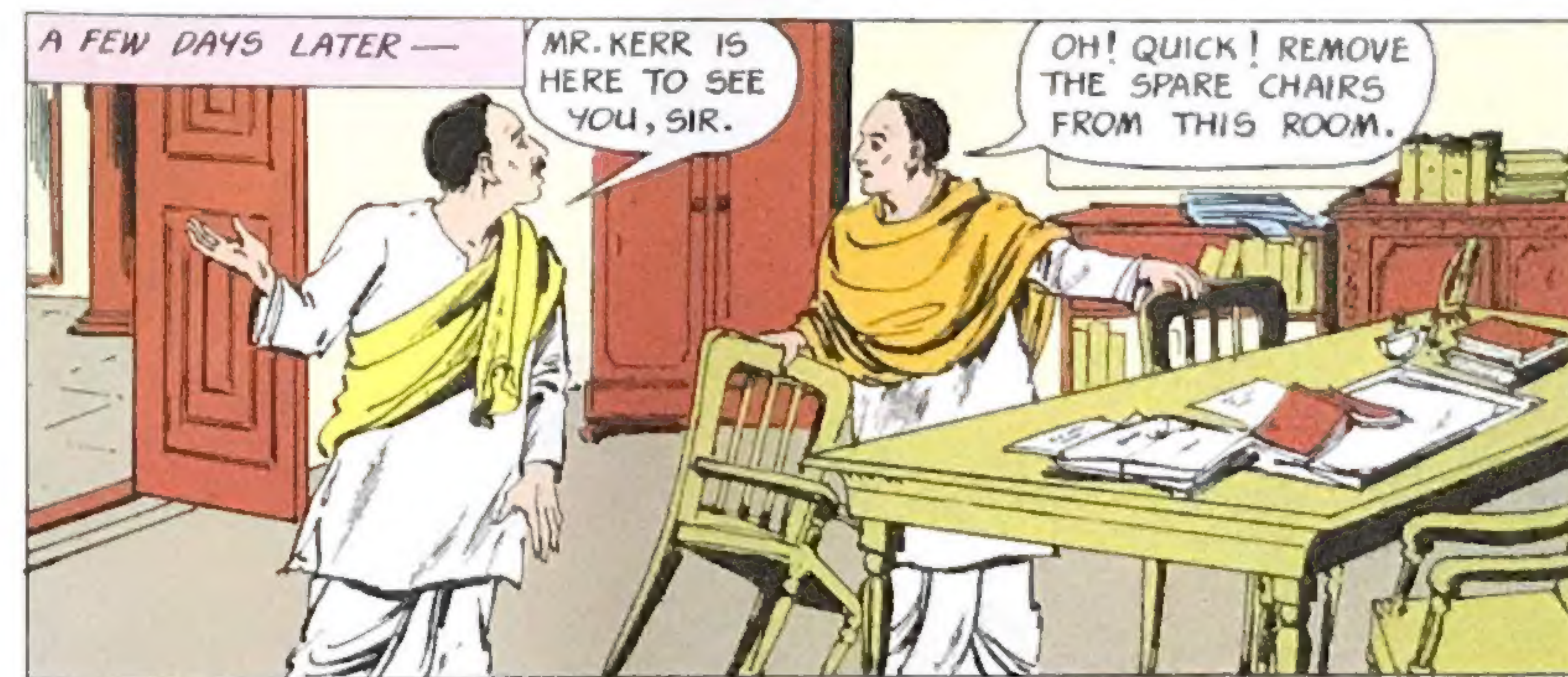
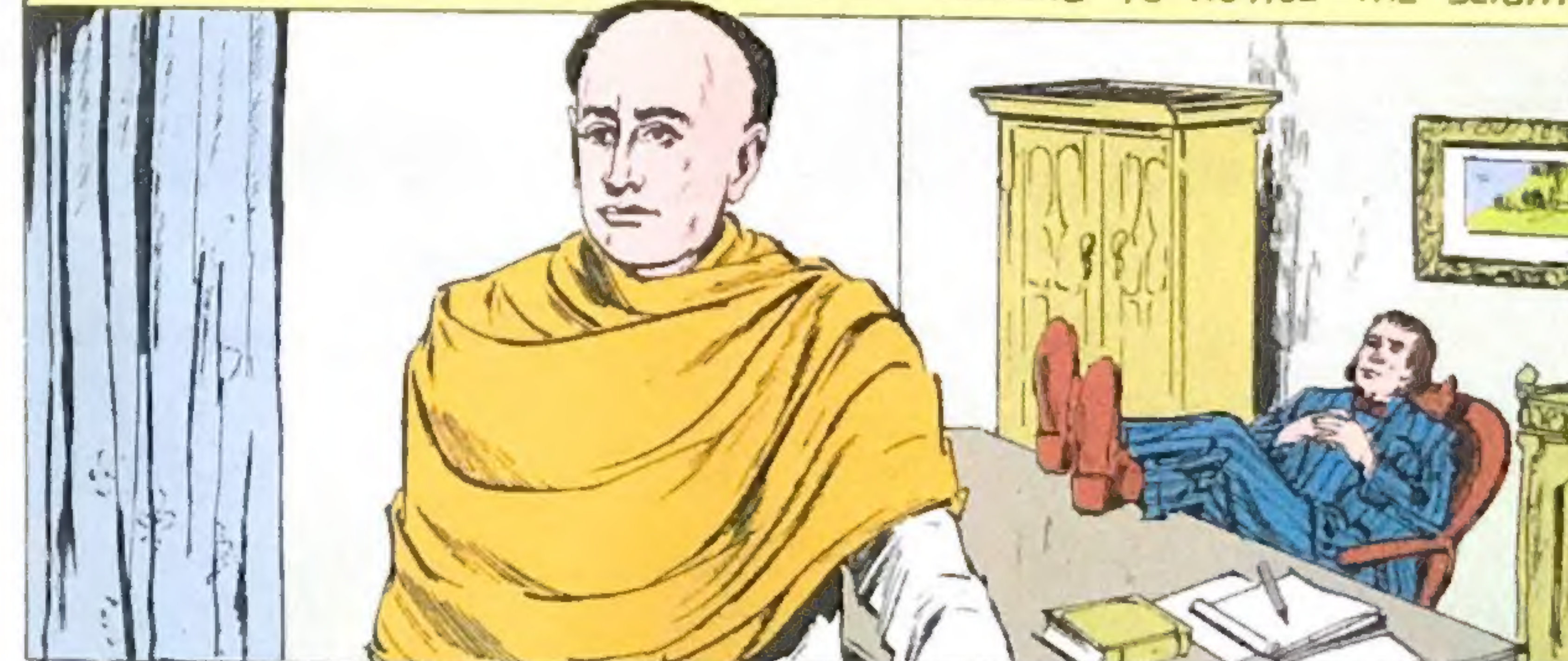
I AM NOT GOING TO CHANGE MY WAYS FOR ANY NEW PRINCIPAL.

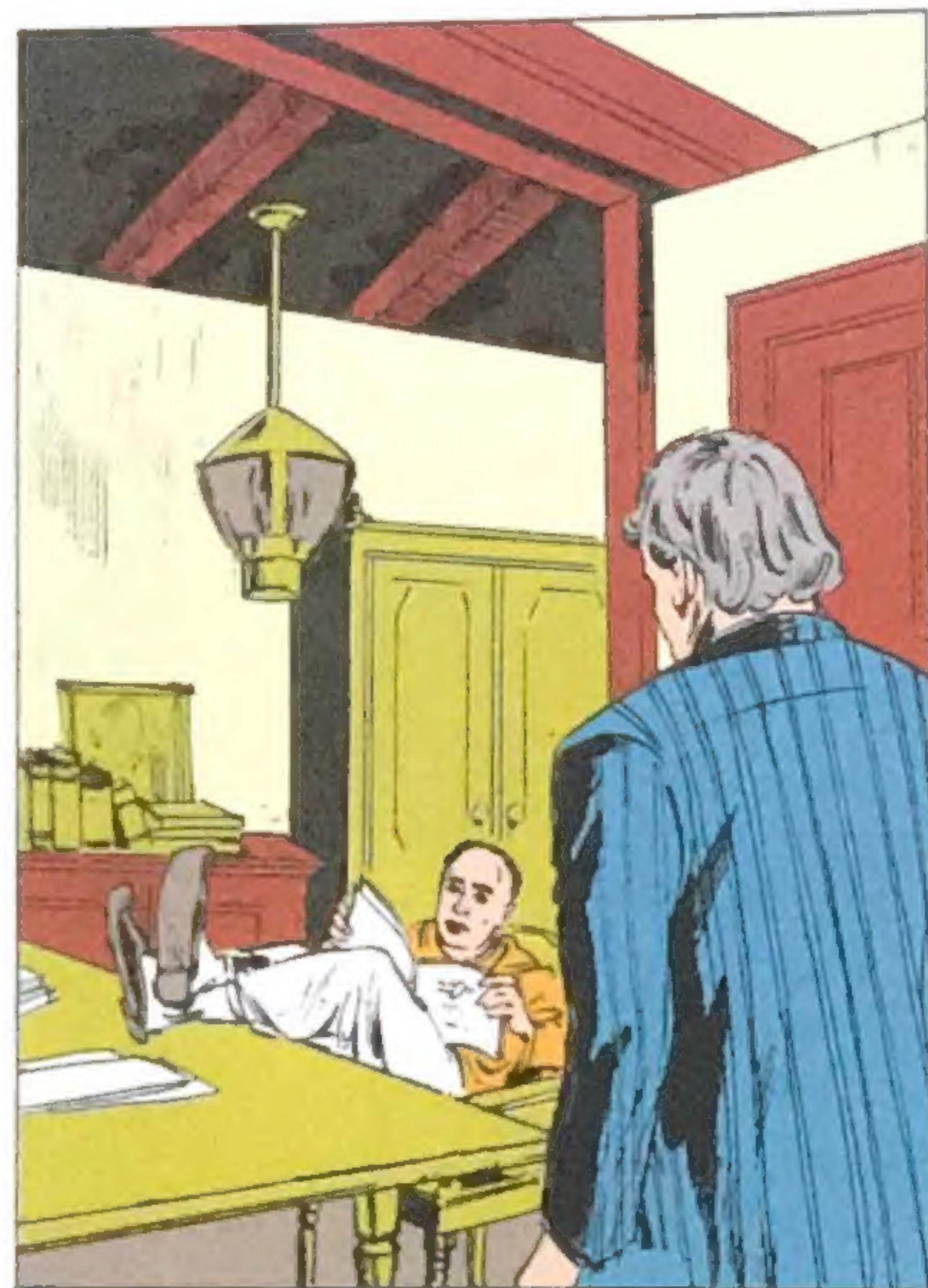
WHEN THE TEACHER ARRIVED LATE THE NEXT DAY, VIDYASAGAR WAS WAITING AT THE DOOR, BUT HE DID NOT SAY A WORD.





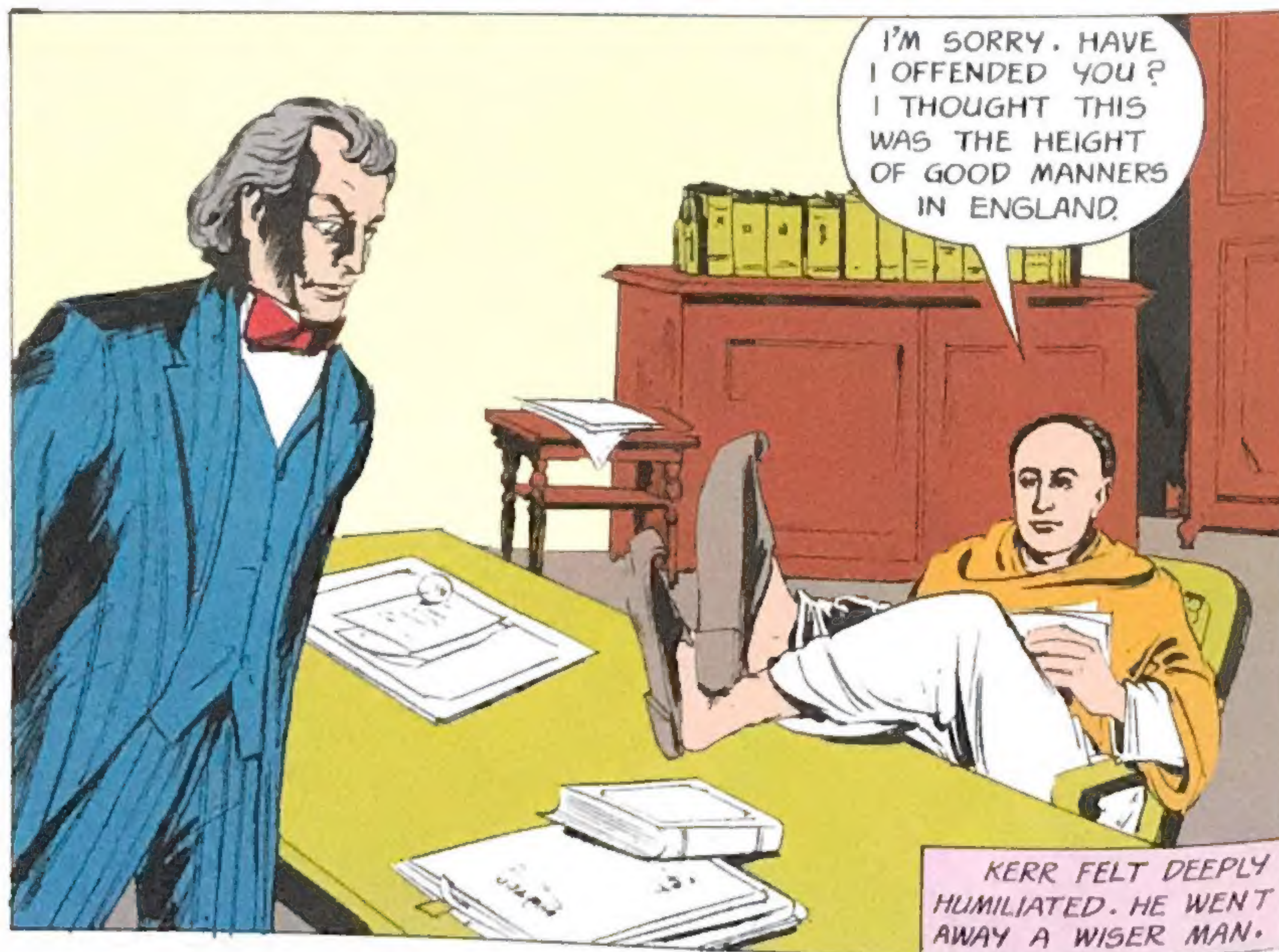
VIDYASAGAR WAS NOT EVEN GIVEN A CHAIR TO SIT ON. HE SAID WHAT HE HAD TO SAY, STANDING ALL THE WHILE, WITHOUT SEEMING TO NOTICE THE SLIGHT.





KERR EXPLODED.

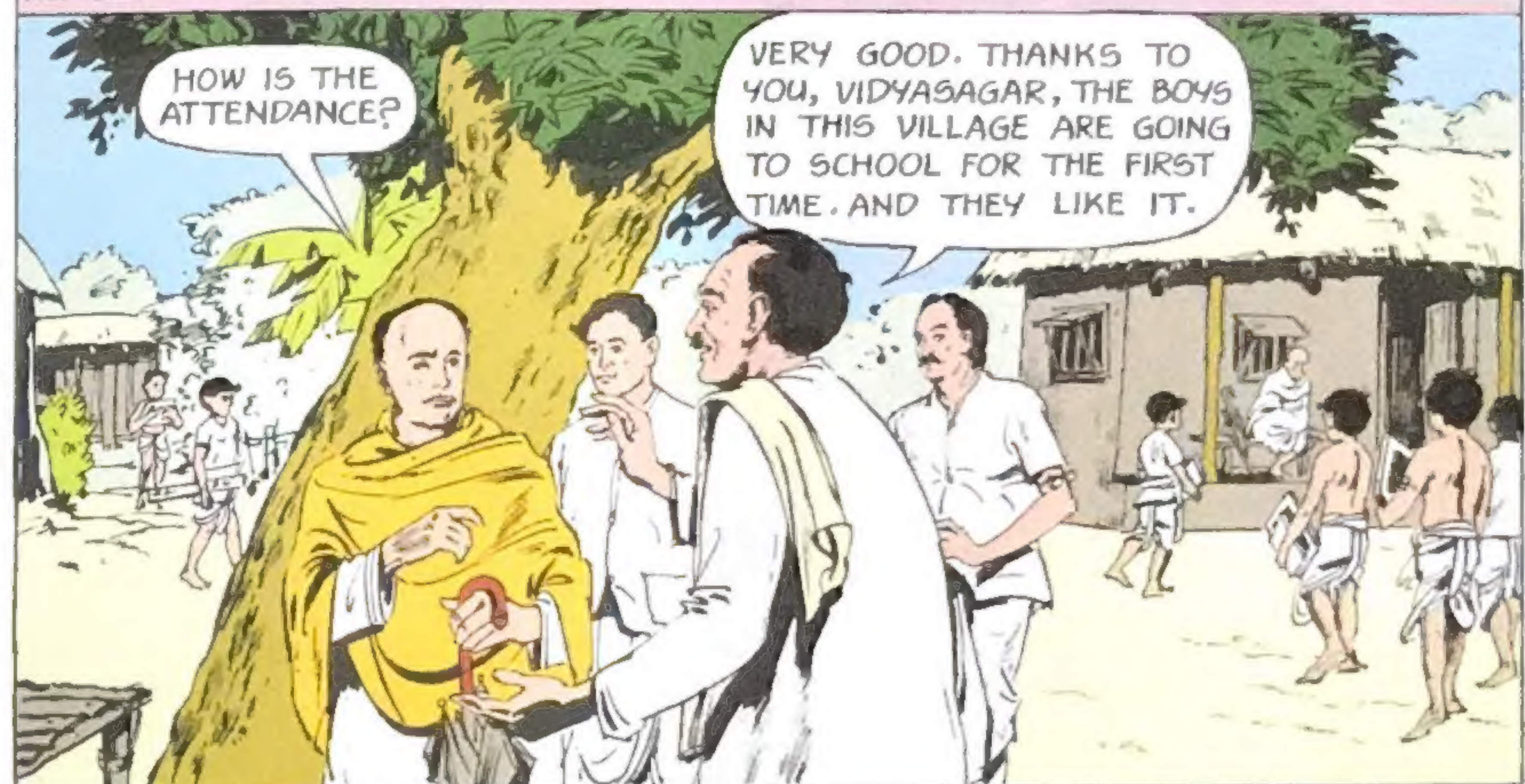
YOU - YOU
NATIVE! HOW
DARE YOU
TREAT ME
LIKE THIS!



I'M SORRY. HAVE
I OFFENDED YOU?
I THOUGHT THIS
WAS THE HEIGHT
OF GOOD MANNERS
IN ENGLAND.

KERR FELT DEEPLY
HUMILIATED. HE WENT
AWAY A WISER MAN.

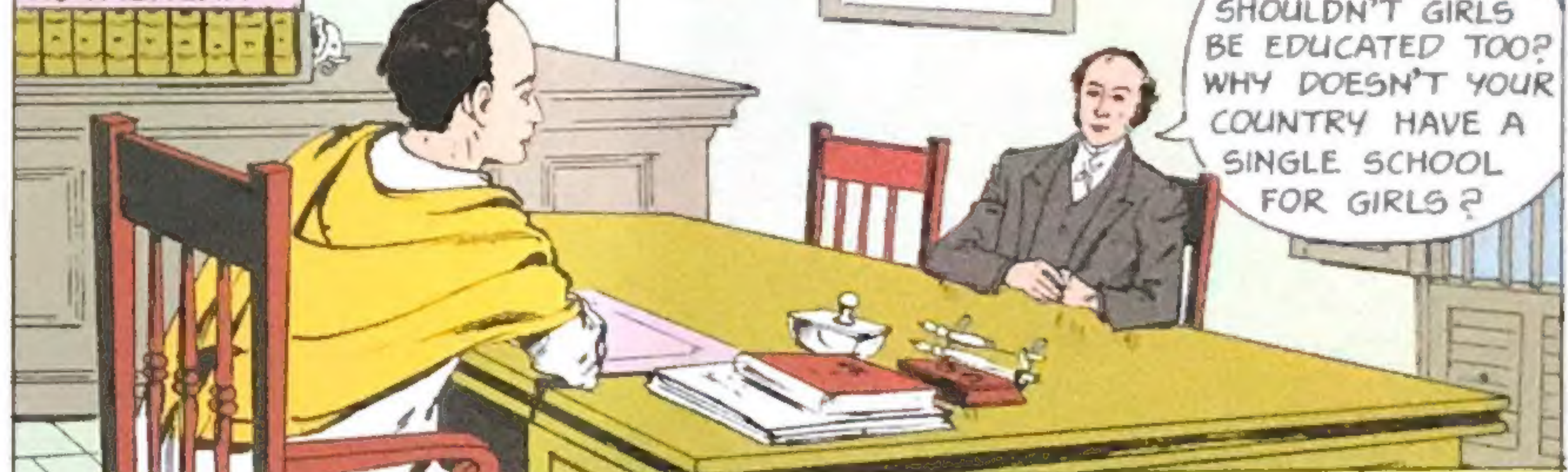
VIDYASAGAR DID NOT RESTRICT HIS ATTENTION TO COLLEGE EDUCATION ALONE.
HE SET UP SCORES OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND TOOK A KEEN INTEREST IN THEM.



HOW IS THE
ATTENDANCE?

VERY GOOD. THANKS TO
YOU, VIDYASAGAR, THE BOYS
IN THIS VILLAGE ARE GOING
TO SCHOOL FOR THE FIRST
TIME. AND THEY LIKE IT.

THEN ONE DAY A MAN CALLED JOHN DRINKWATER BETHUNE CAME TO SEE
VIDYASAGAR.



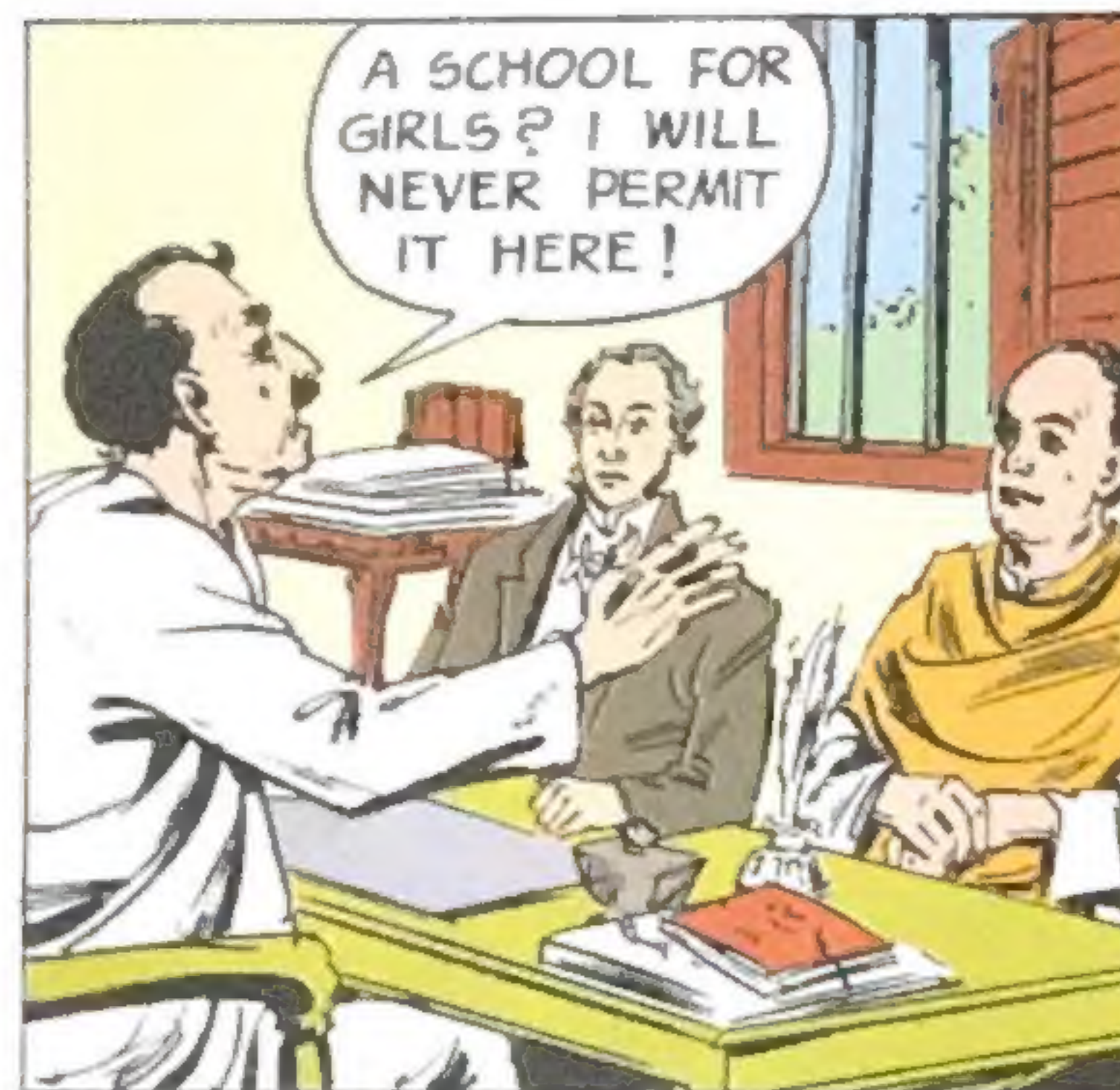
SHOULDN'T GIRLS
BE EDUCATED TOO?
WHY DOESN'T YOUR
COUNTRY HAVE A
SINGLE SCHOOL
FOR GIRLS?

VIDYASAGAR WAS DELIGHTED TO MEET ANOTHER WHO SHARED HIS VIEWS.



I AM PLANNING
TO START ONE.
WHAT DO YOU
THINK?

YOU ARE JUST
THE MAN I WAS
LOOKING FOR!

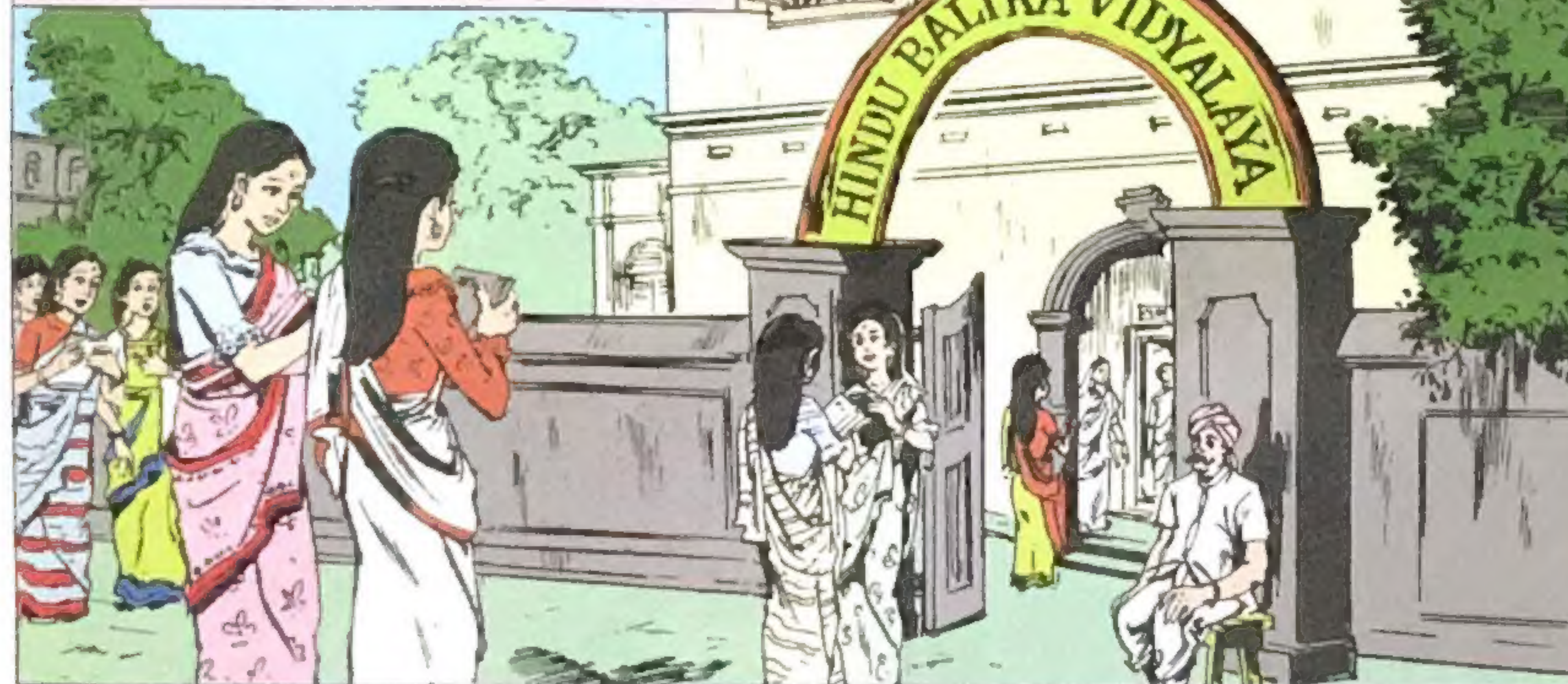


A SCHOOL FOR GIRLS? I WILL NEVER PERMIT IT HERE!



WHAT AN IDEA! YOU MUST BE CRAZY. PLEASE DON'T WASTE MY TIME AND YOURS.

BUT VIDYASAGAR WAS NOT ONE TO BE EASILY DISCOURAGED. THE HINDU BALIKA VIDYALAYA WAS STARTED.



THIS MAN VIDYASAGAR HAS STARTED A SCHOOL FOR GIRLS. I'D RATHER SEE MY DAUGHTER DEAD THAN SEND HER TO SCHOOL. WHO IS HE ANYWAY?

HE'S THE PRINCIPAL OF SANSKRIT COLLEGE. AND HE SAYS THE SHASTRAS HAVE NOTHING AGAINST GIRLS BEING EDUCATED.

WHAT DOES HE KNOW OF THE SHASTRAS? IF GIRLS GO TO SCHOOL, WHO WILL STAY AT HOME TO DO ALL THE WORK?



VIDYASAGAR BECAME FAMOUS, BUT HE CONTINUED TO DRESS SIMPLY. ONE DAY —

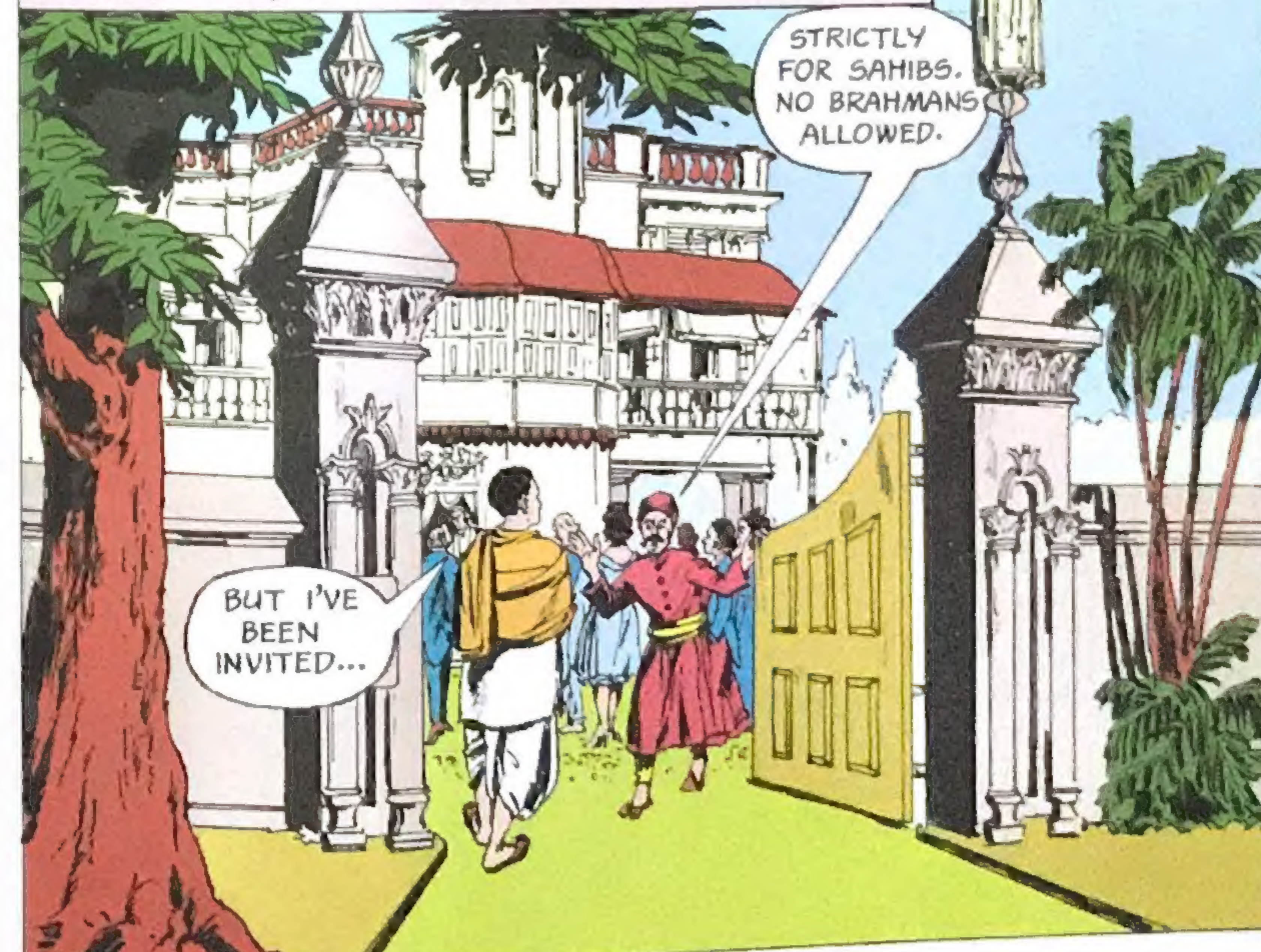
WHERE IS VIDYASAGAR?

THERE! THAT'S HIM.



WHY, HE LOOKS LIKE A PALANQUIN-BEARER. WHAT A FOOL I WAS TO COME ALL THE WAY TO SEE HIM!

VIDYASAGAR WAS VERY PROUD OF HIS TRADITIONAL DRESS. HE WORE IT EVERYWHERE. ONCE HE WAS INVITED TO BE THE GUEST OF HONOUR AT A PARTY. YET, AT THE GATES OF THE MANSION —



STRICTLY FOR SAHIBS. NO BRAHMANS ALLOWED.

BUT I'VE BEEN INVITED...

VIDYASAGAR WENT HOME.

I MUST NOT DISAPPOINT MY HOSTS.

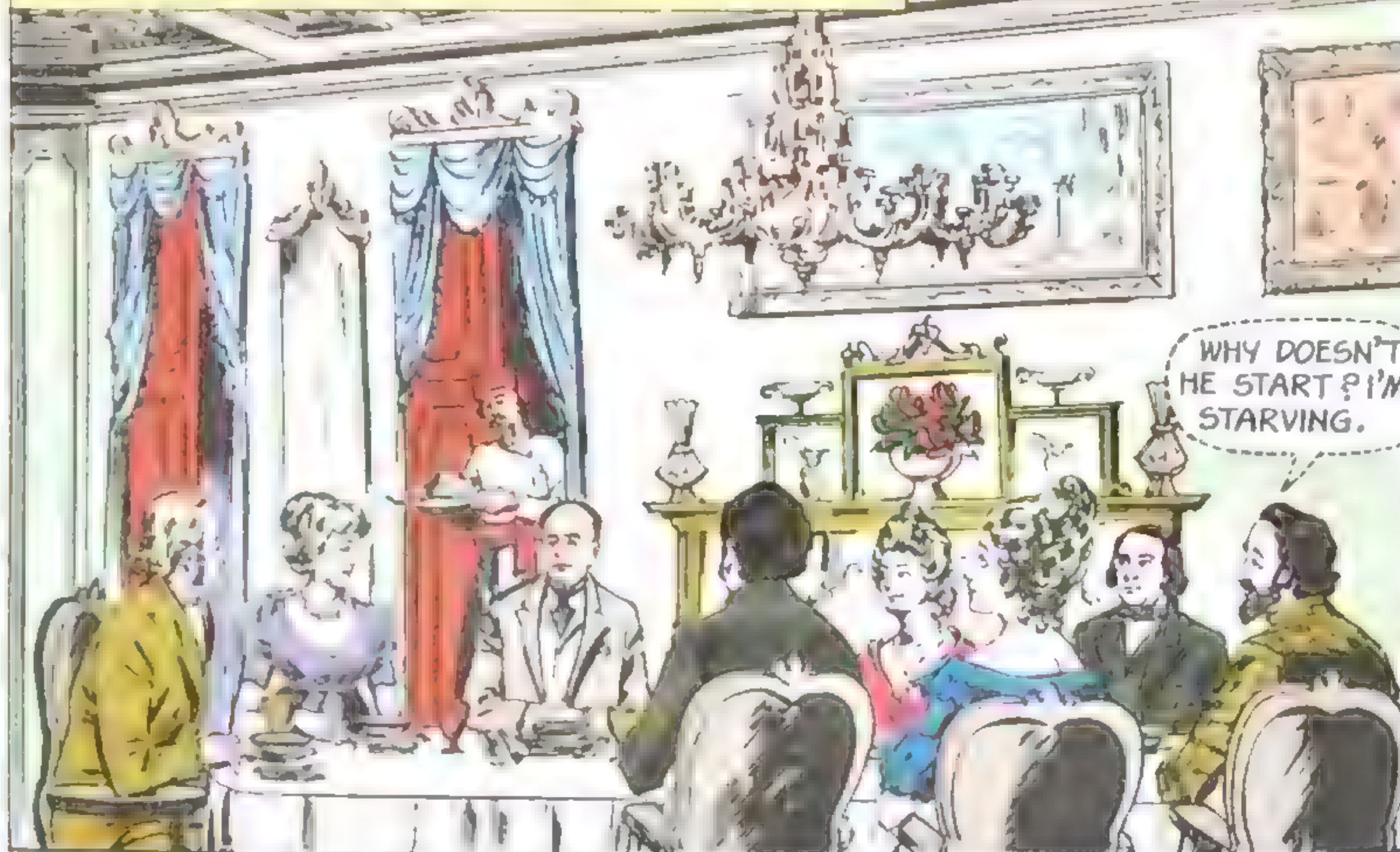


WHEN HE RETURNED THE WATCHMAN DIDN'T EVEN RECOGNIZE HIM.

THIS WAY, SIR. YES, SIR. PLEASE GO IN, SIR.



THEY SAT DOWN TO DINNER AND LOOKED TO VIDYASAGAR, THE CHIEF GUEST, TO START IT. BUT HE MADE NO MOVE



THEN VIDYASAGAR EXPLAINED.

WHEN I CAME HERE IN A DHOTI, I WAS NOT ALLOWED TO ENTER. BUT ONCE I HAD CHANGED INTO EUROPEAN CLOTHES I WAS WELCOMED!



THEY UNDERSTOOD.

I AM SORRY, VIDYASAGAR.

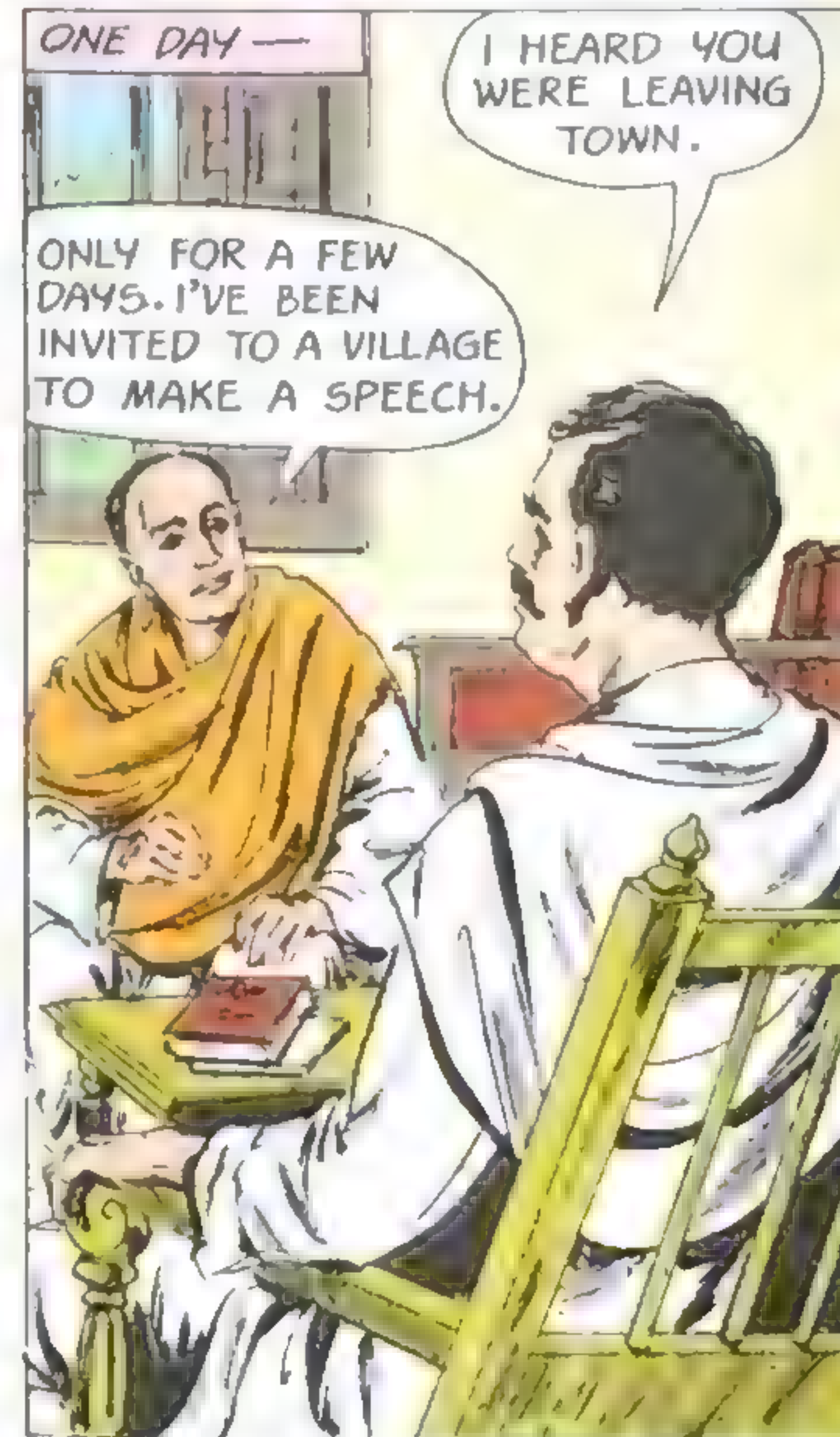
I REALISED THEN THAT IT WAS THE CLOTHES THAT WERE INVITED AND NOT THE MAN WEARING THEM.



ONE DAY —

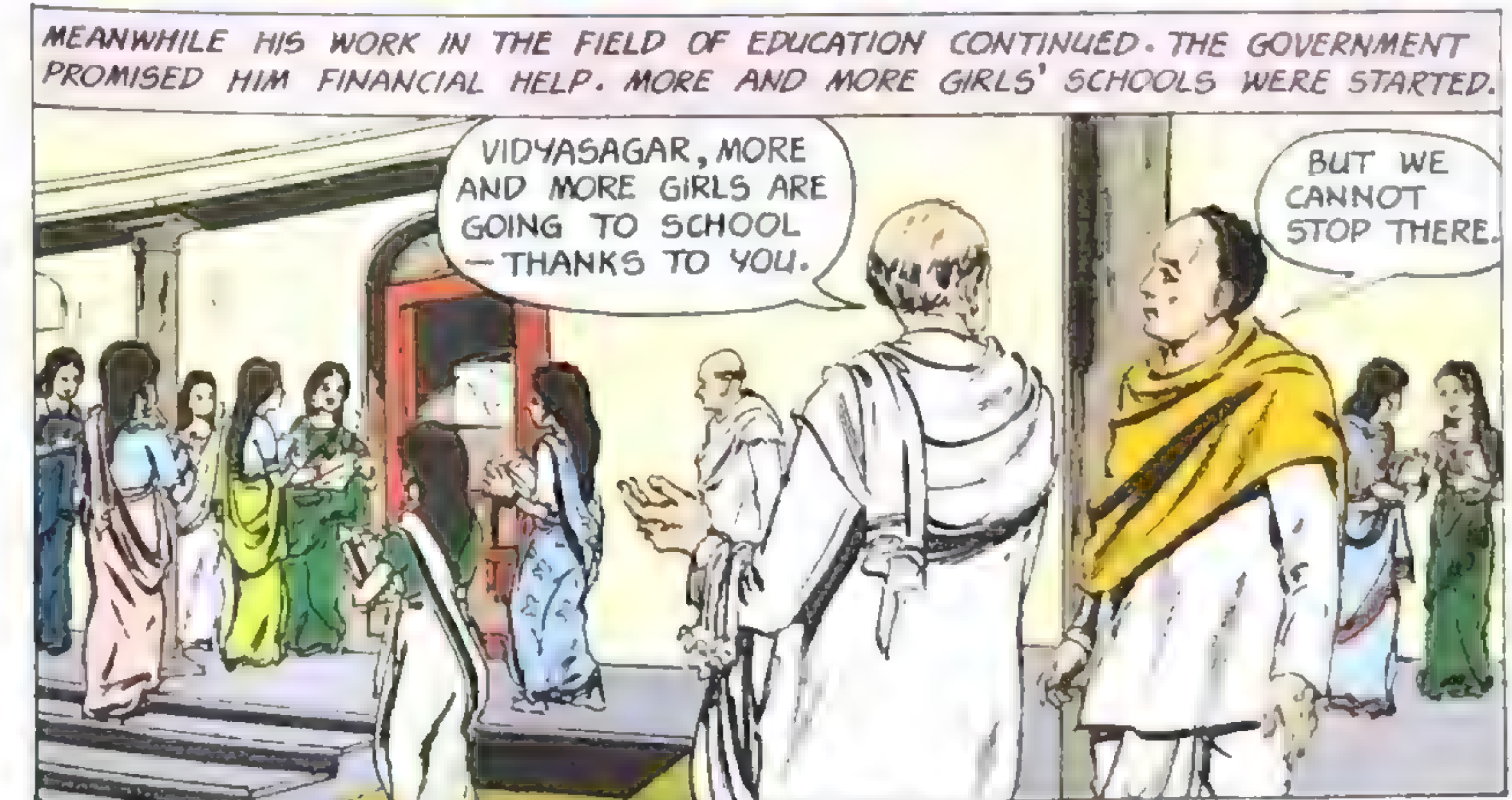
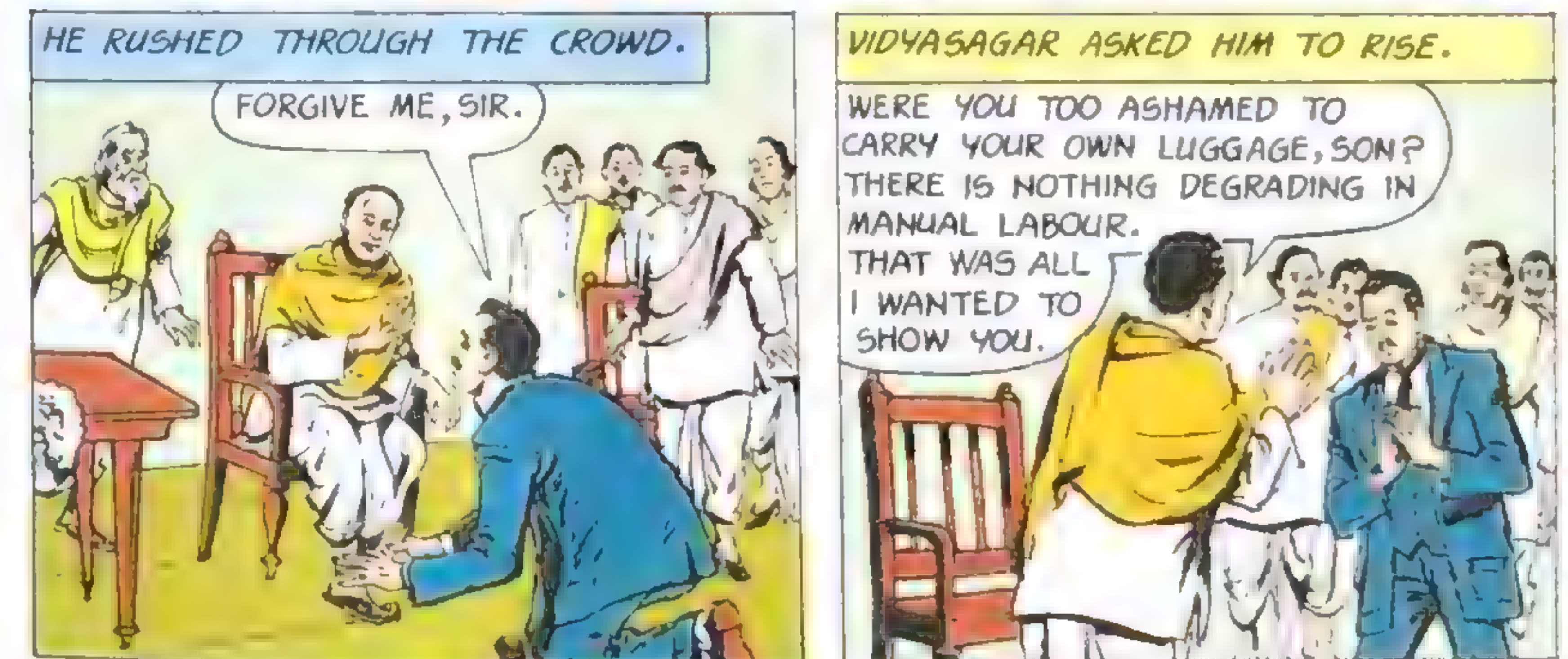
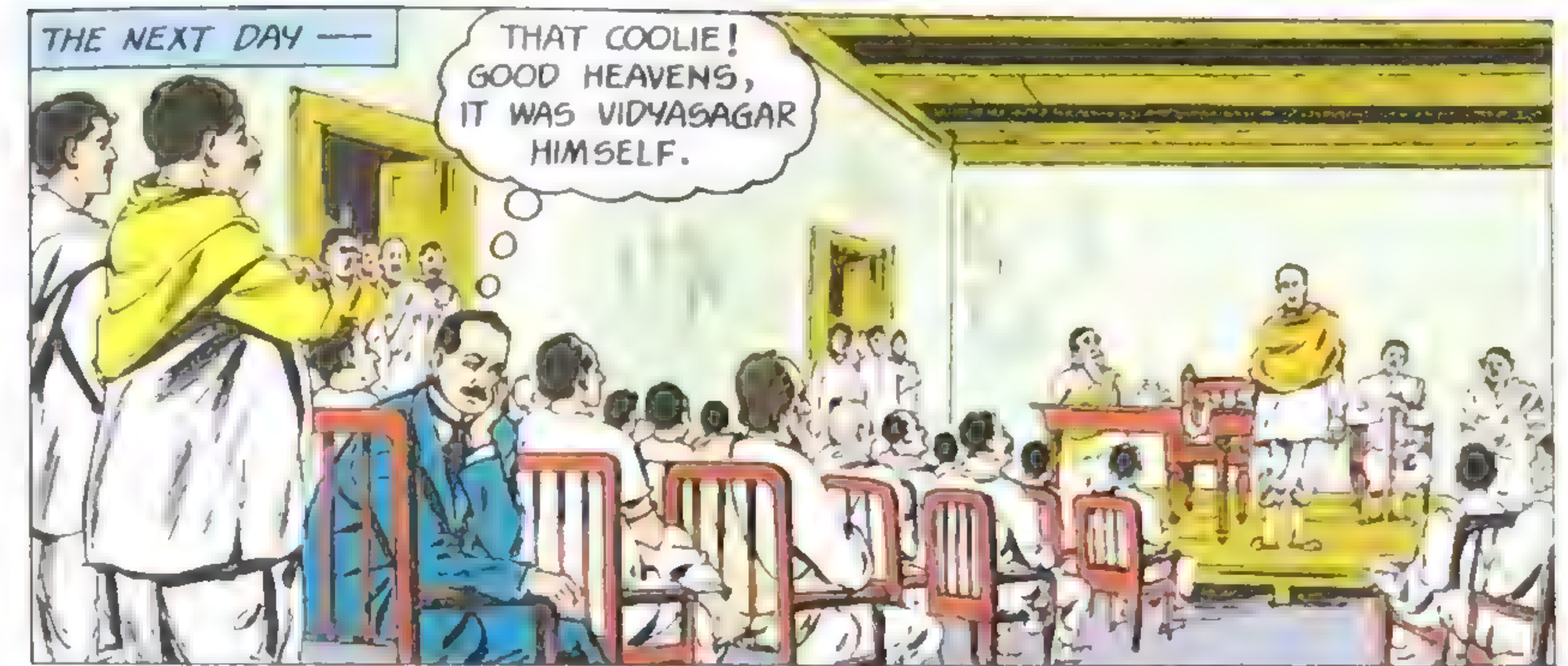
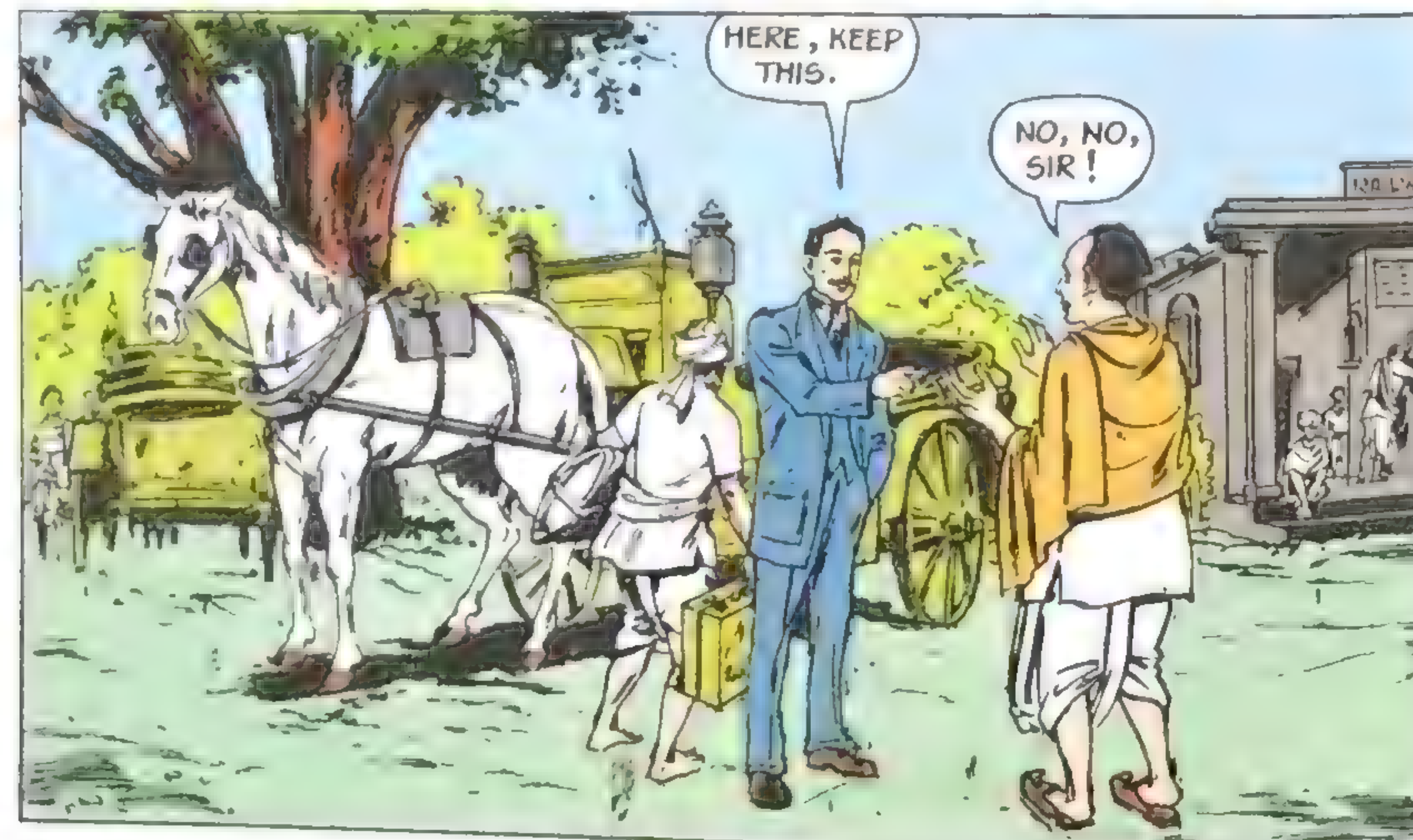
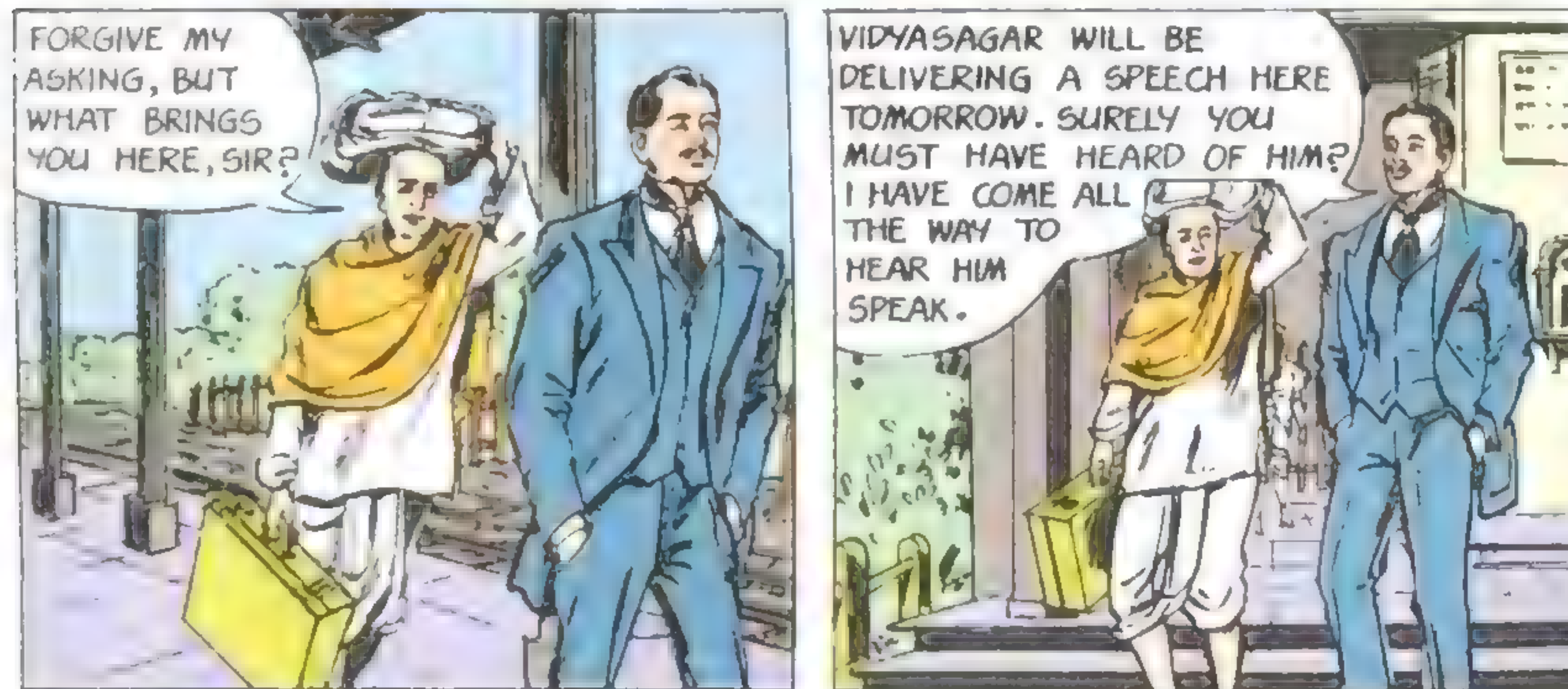
I HEARD YOU WERE LEAVING TOWN.

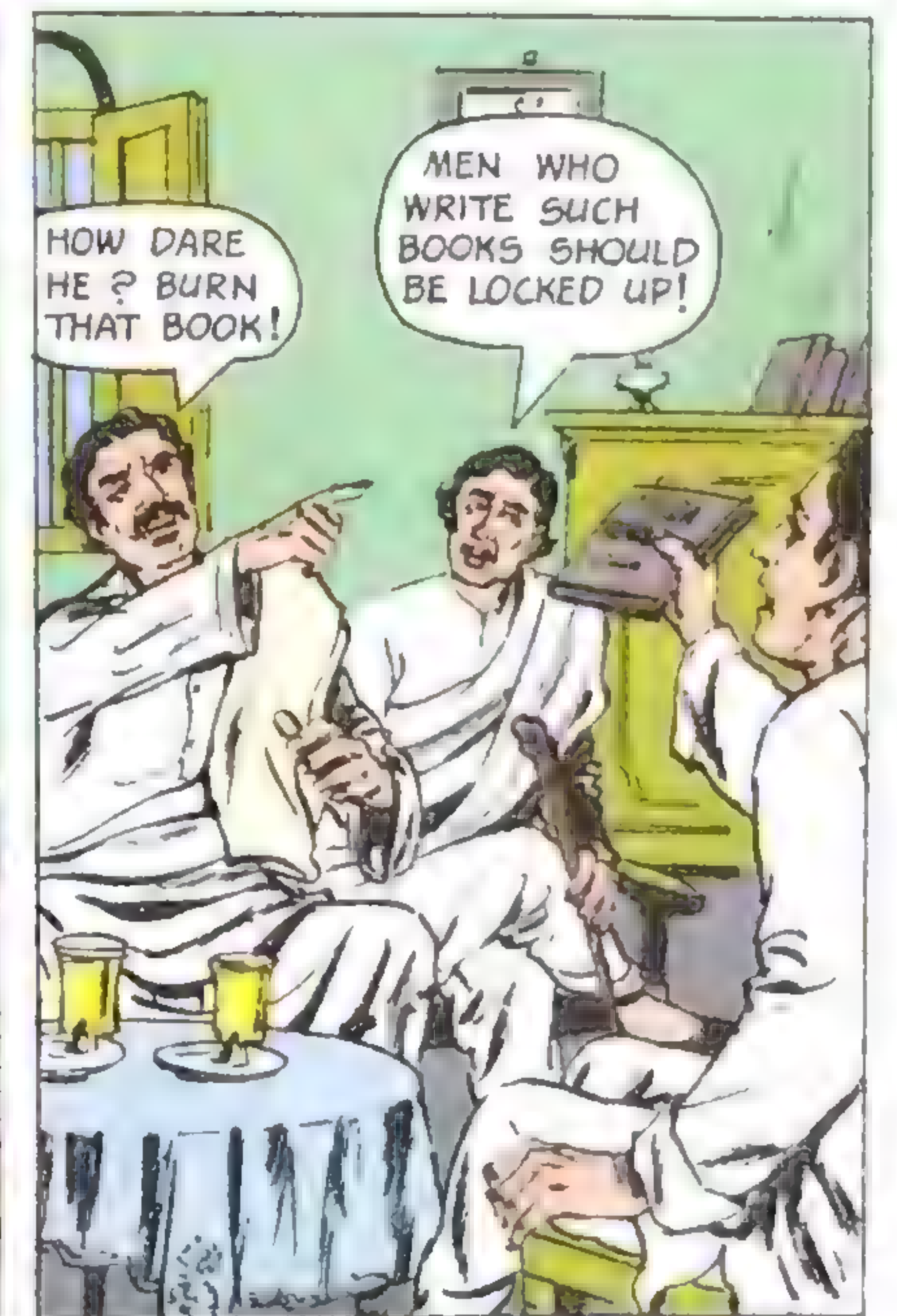
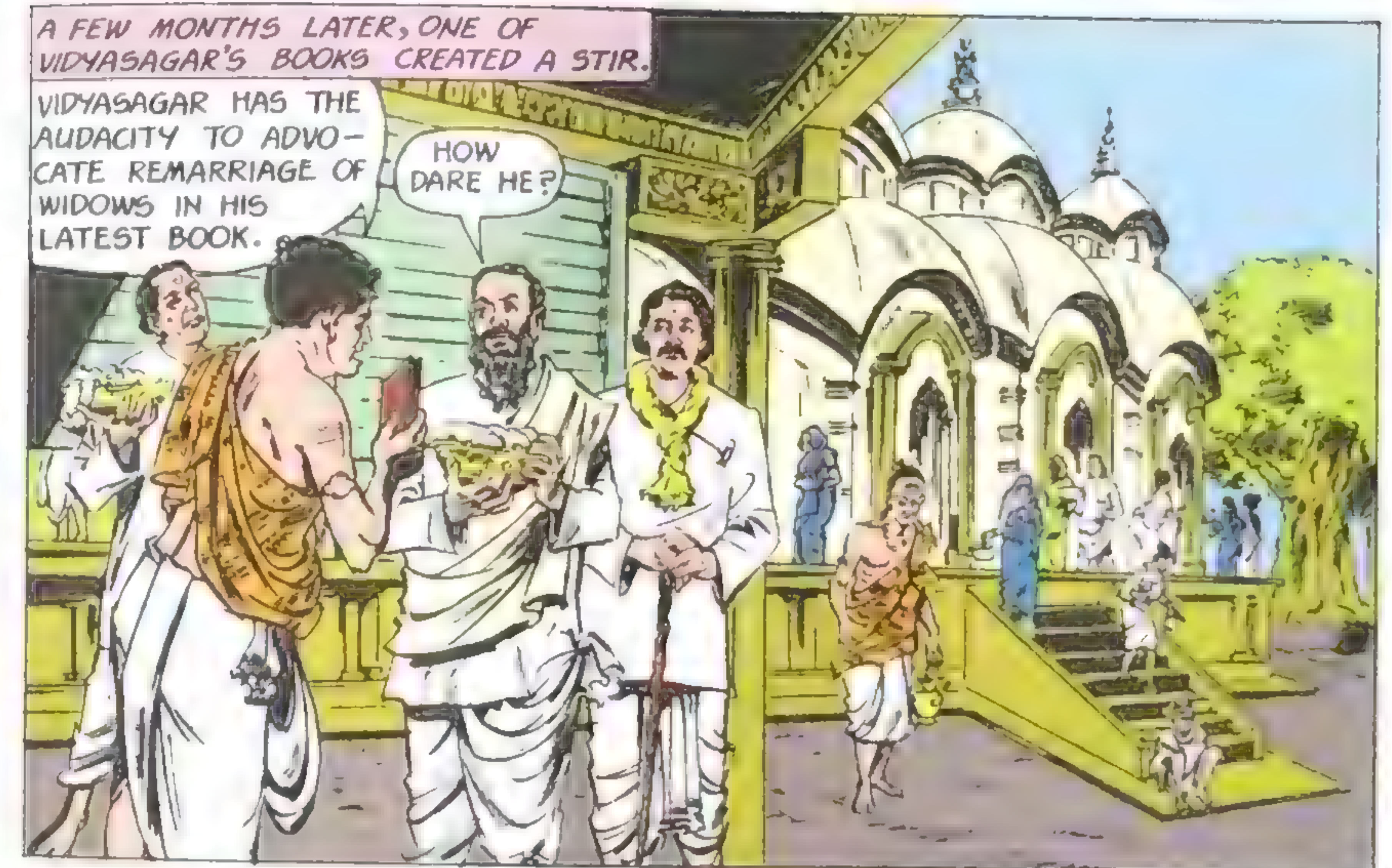
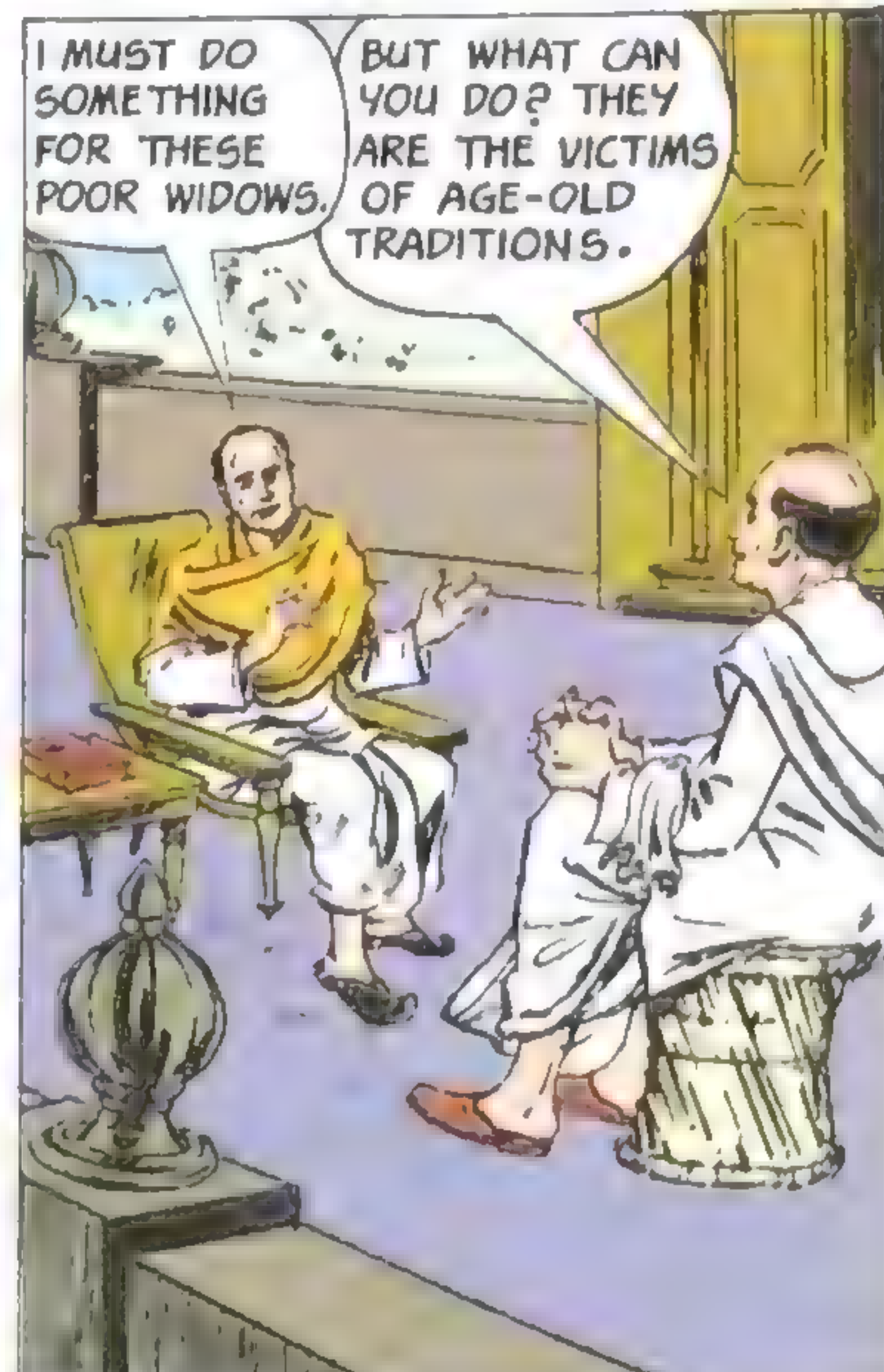
ONLY FOR A FEW DAYS. I'VE BEEN INVITED TO A VILLAGE TO MAKE A SPEECH.



VIDYASAGAR WENT BY TRAIN. HE ALIGHTED AT A DESERTED PLATFORM.







THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE ABUSED VIDYASAGAR. OLD FRIENDS AVOIDED HIM.

HALLO! HAVEN'T SEEN YOU FOR A LONG TIME!

EXCUSE ME, PLEASE. I AM IN A HURRY.

VIDYASAGAR RETAINED HIS SENSE OF HUMOUR EVEN IN THOSE ADVERSE DAYS.

DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH RAM-BABU WAS ABUSING YOU, YESTERDAY?

WHY DOES HE SPEAK ILL OF ME? I'VE NEVER DONE HIM ANY GOOD.

BUT ONE RICH MAN WENT FURTHER.

IF WE CANNOT STOP VIDYASAGAR BY MERE THREATS, WE SHALL HAVE TO KILL HIM.

KNOCK

WHO'S THAT?

THE DOOR WAS OPENED.

I HEARD YOU WANTED TO KILL ME. WELL, HERE I AM.

A WOMAN ONCE MARRIED CANNOT GET MARRIED AGAIN. OUR ANCIENT SAGES AND LAW-GIVERS HAVE SAID SO. WHO ARE YOU TO QUESTION IT?

KINDLY READ THESE LINES FROM "PARASHARA SAMHITA." HERE PARASHARA SAYS THAT A WOMAN WHO HAS LOST HER HUSBAND CAN REMARRY. WASN'T HE A WISE MAN OF ANCIENT INDIA?

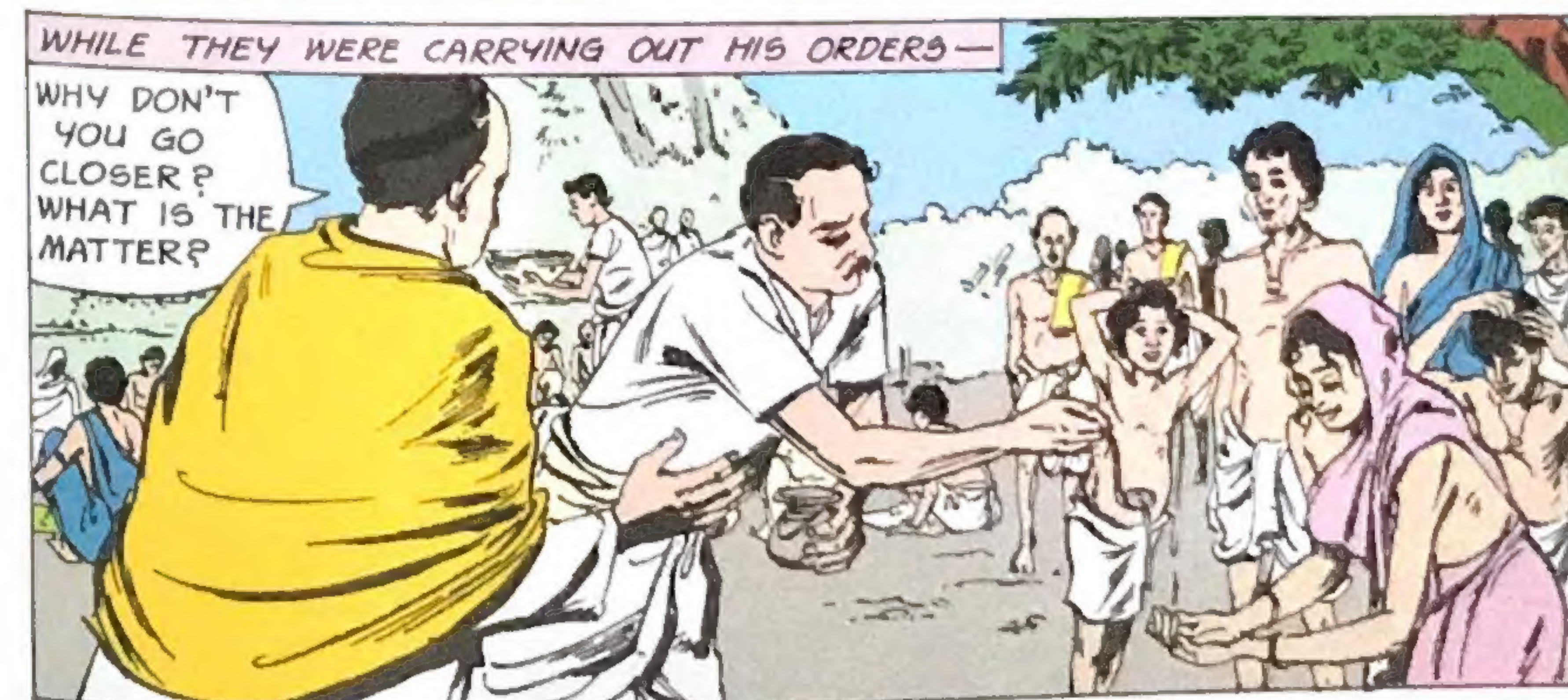
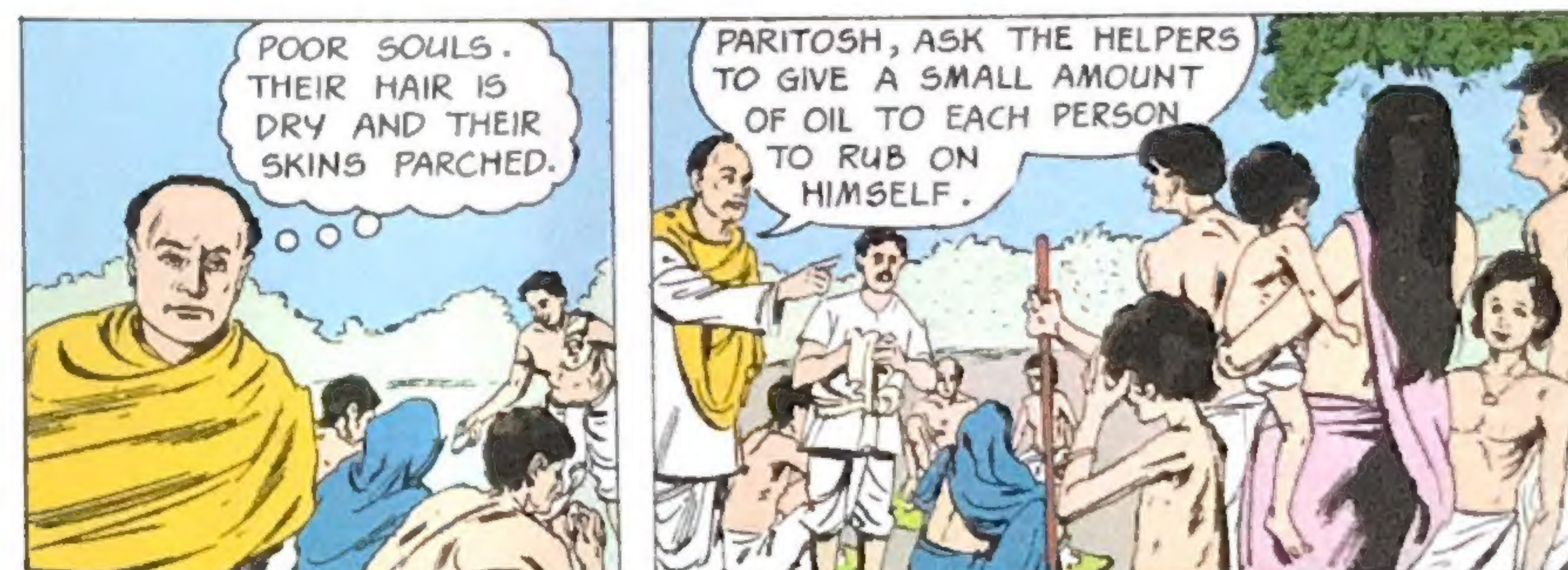
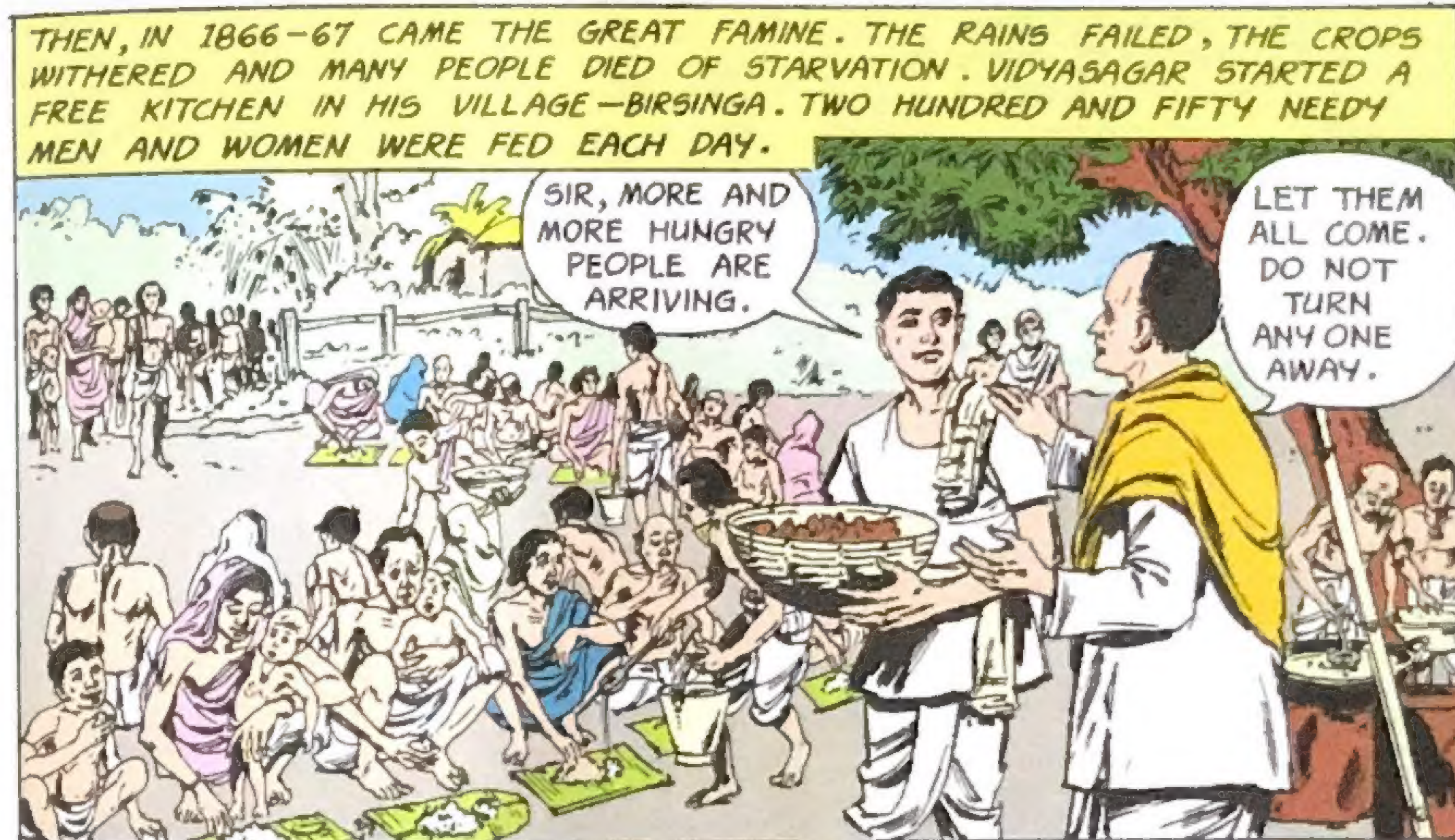
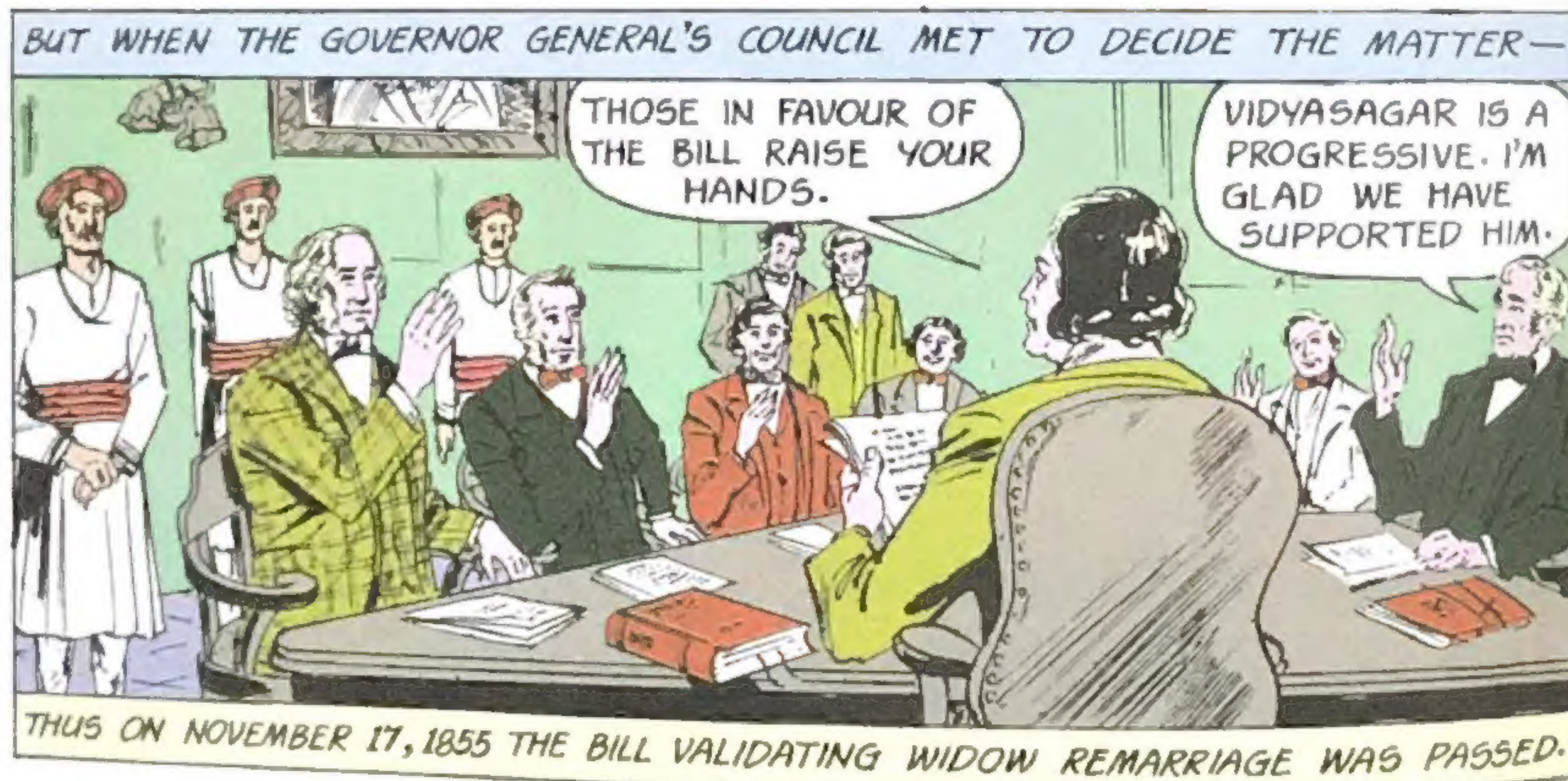
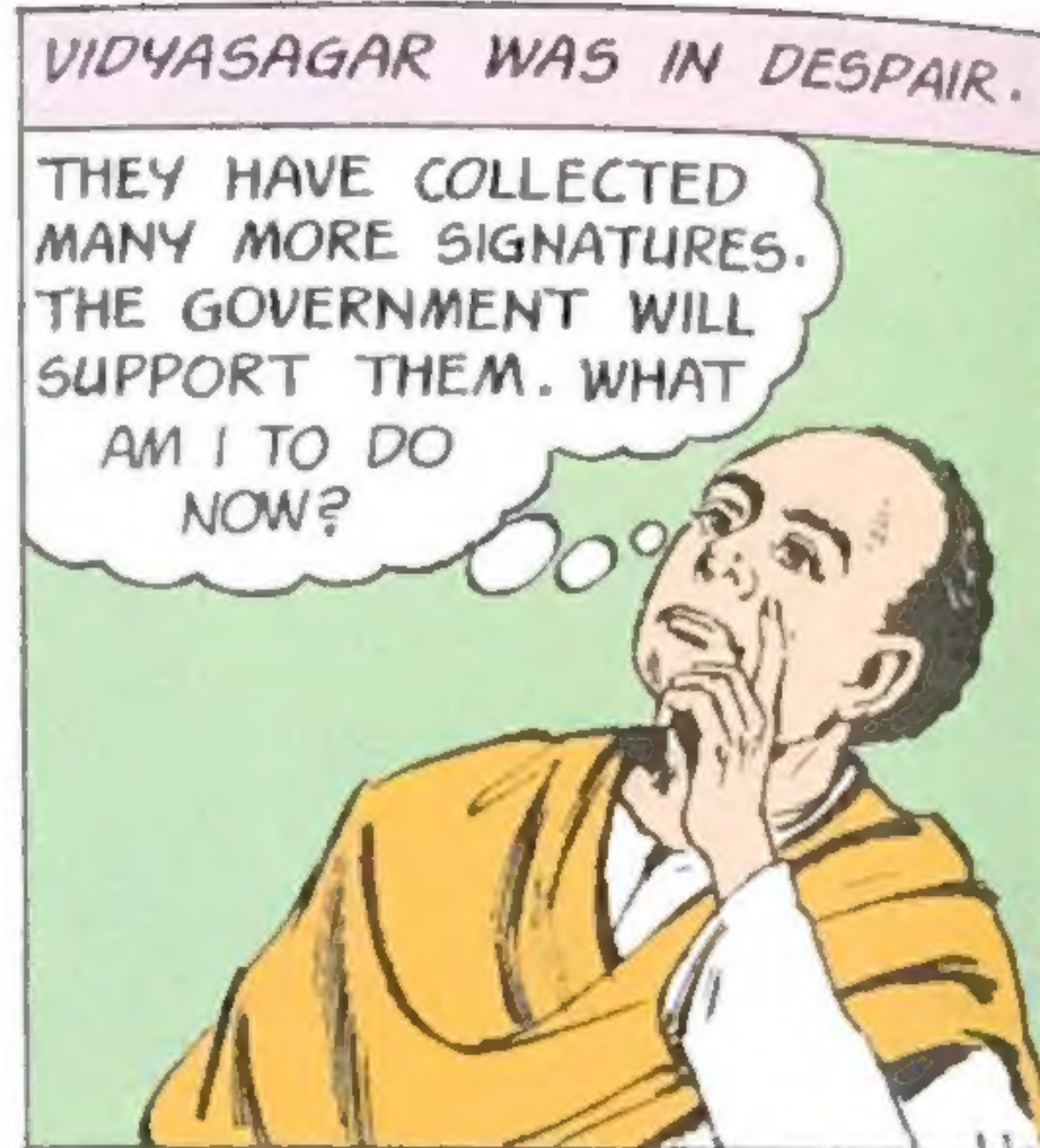
YOU MUST HAVE WRITTEN THESE LINES YOURSELF AND GOT THE BOOK REPRINTED.

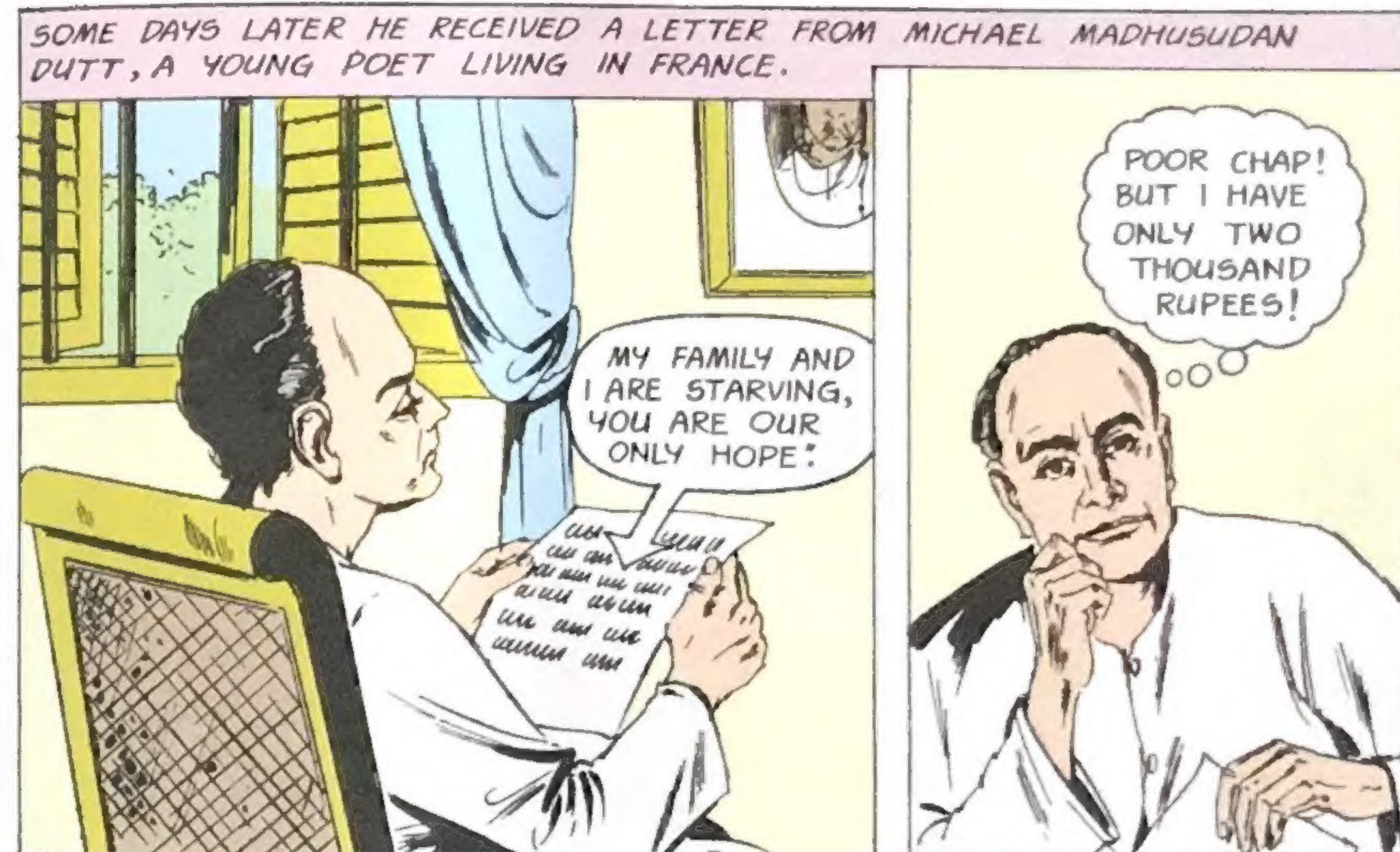
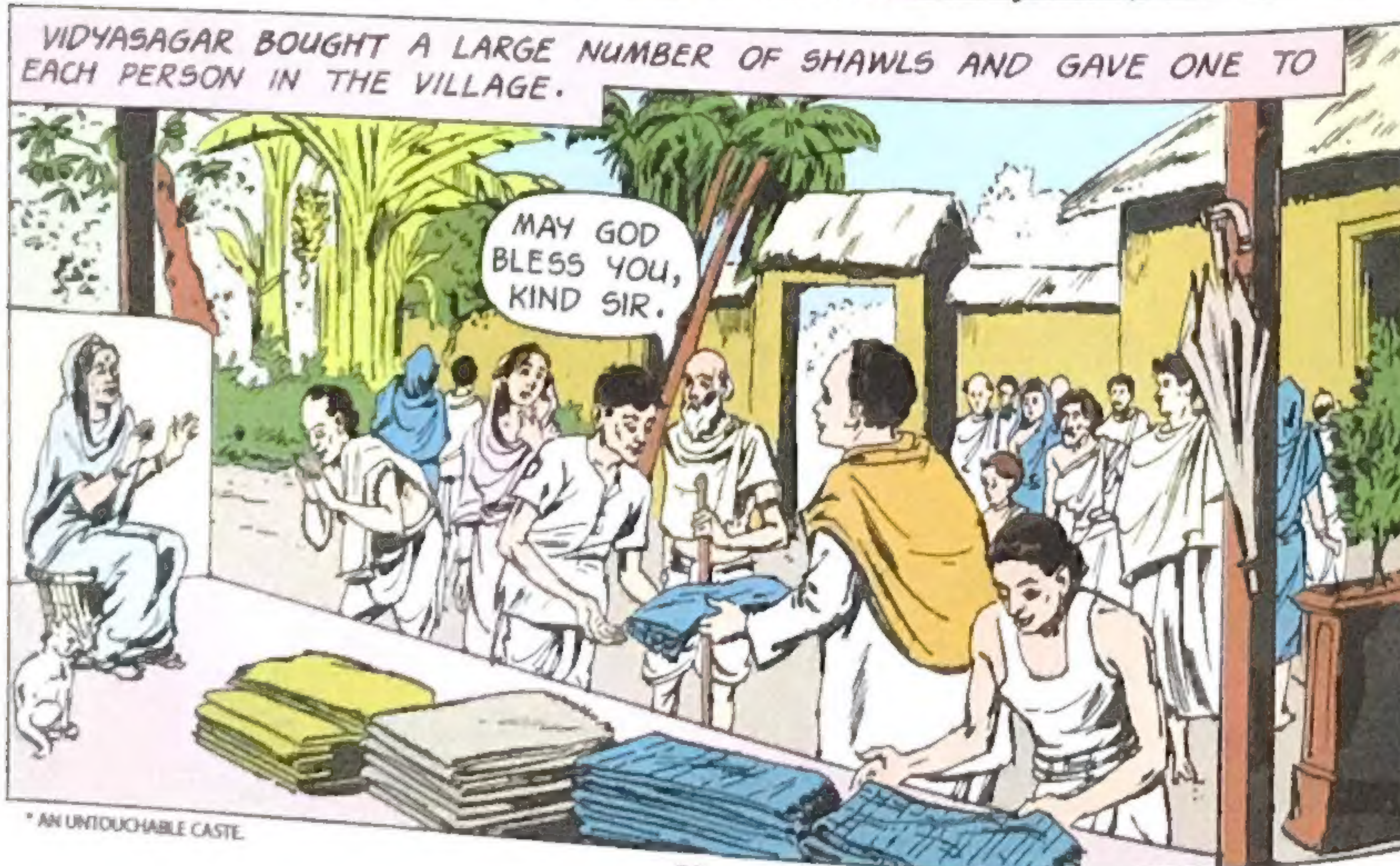
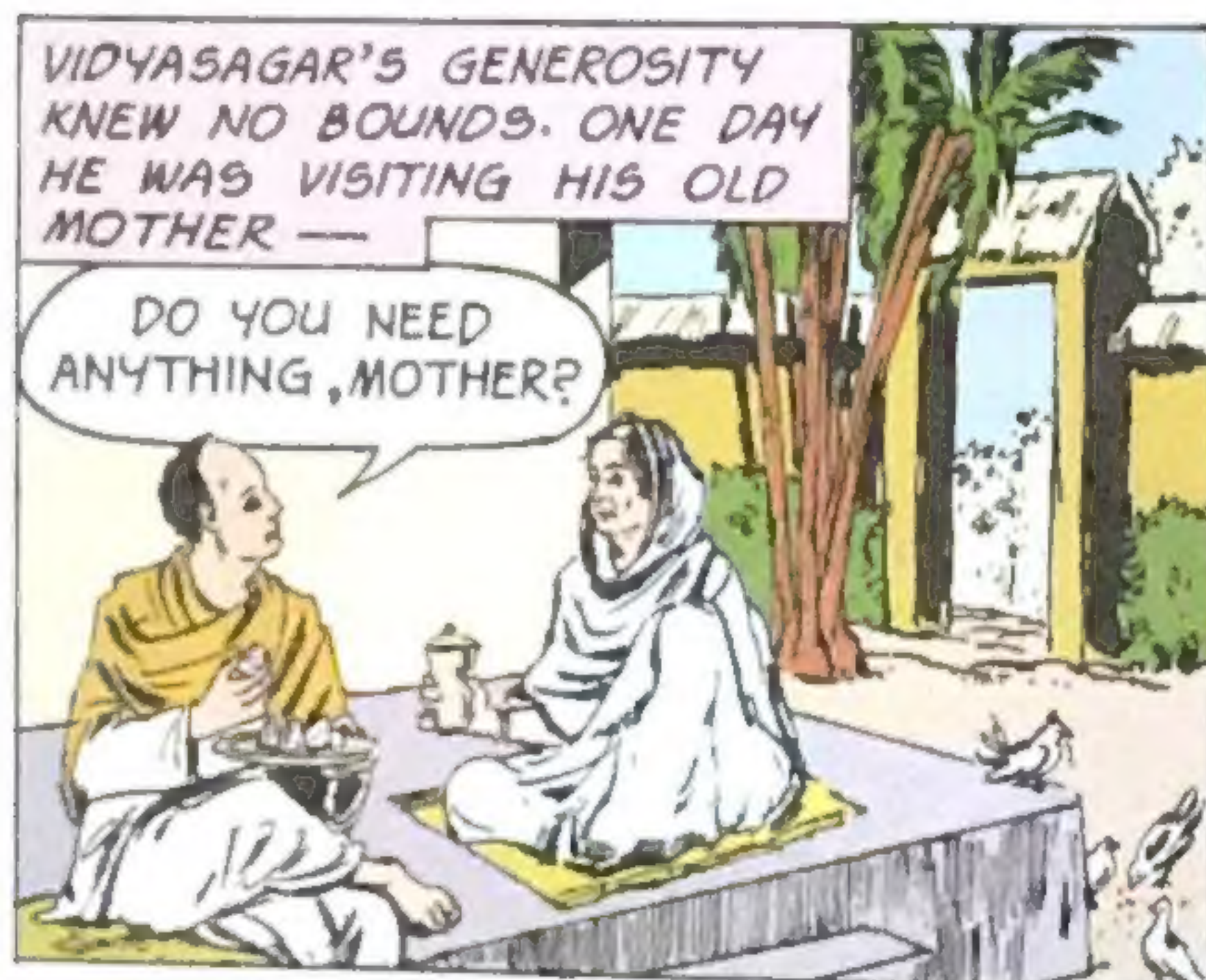
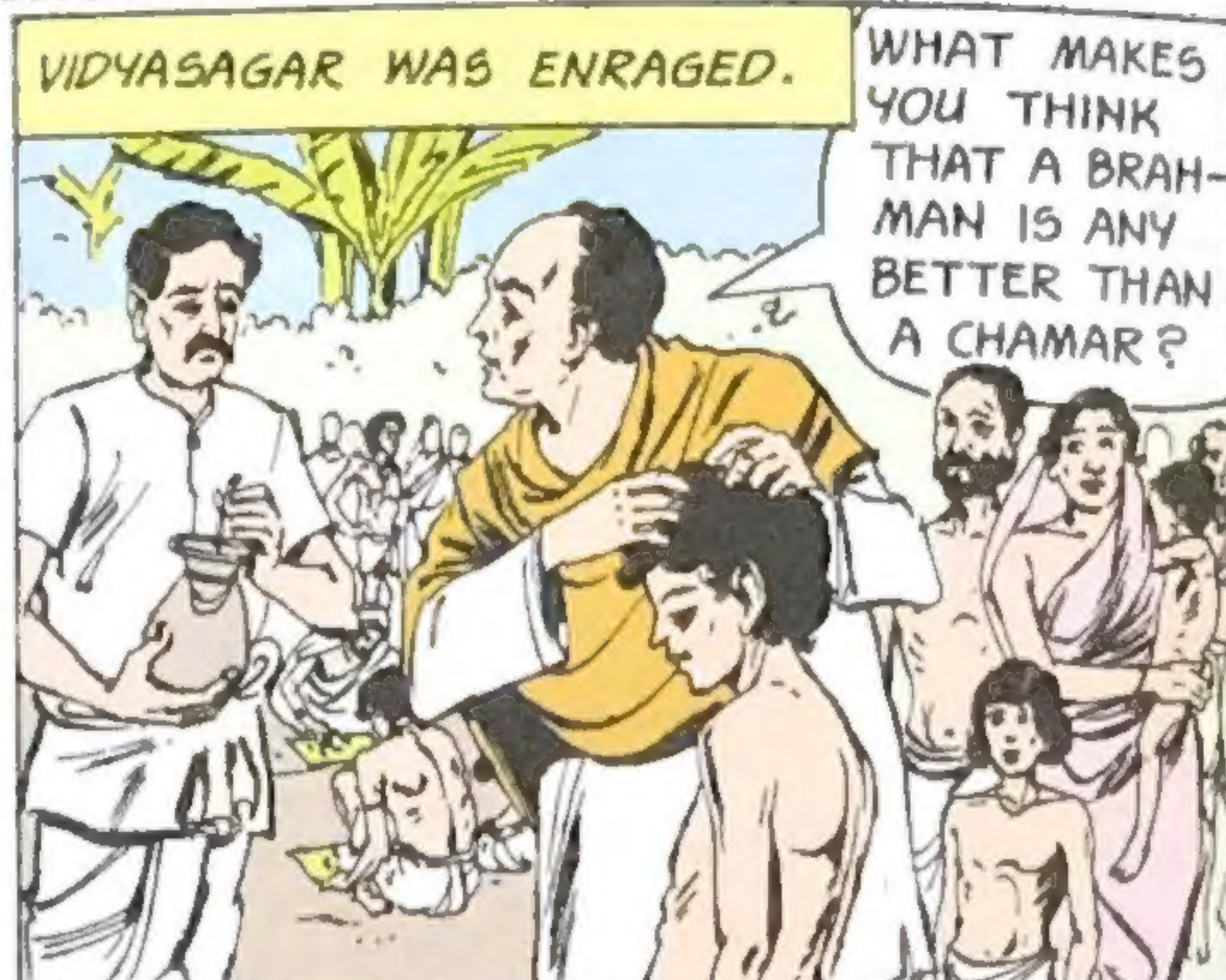
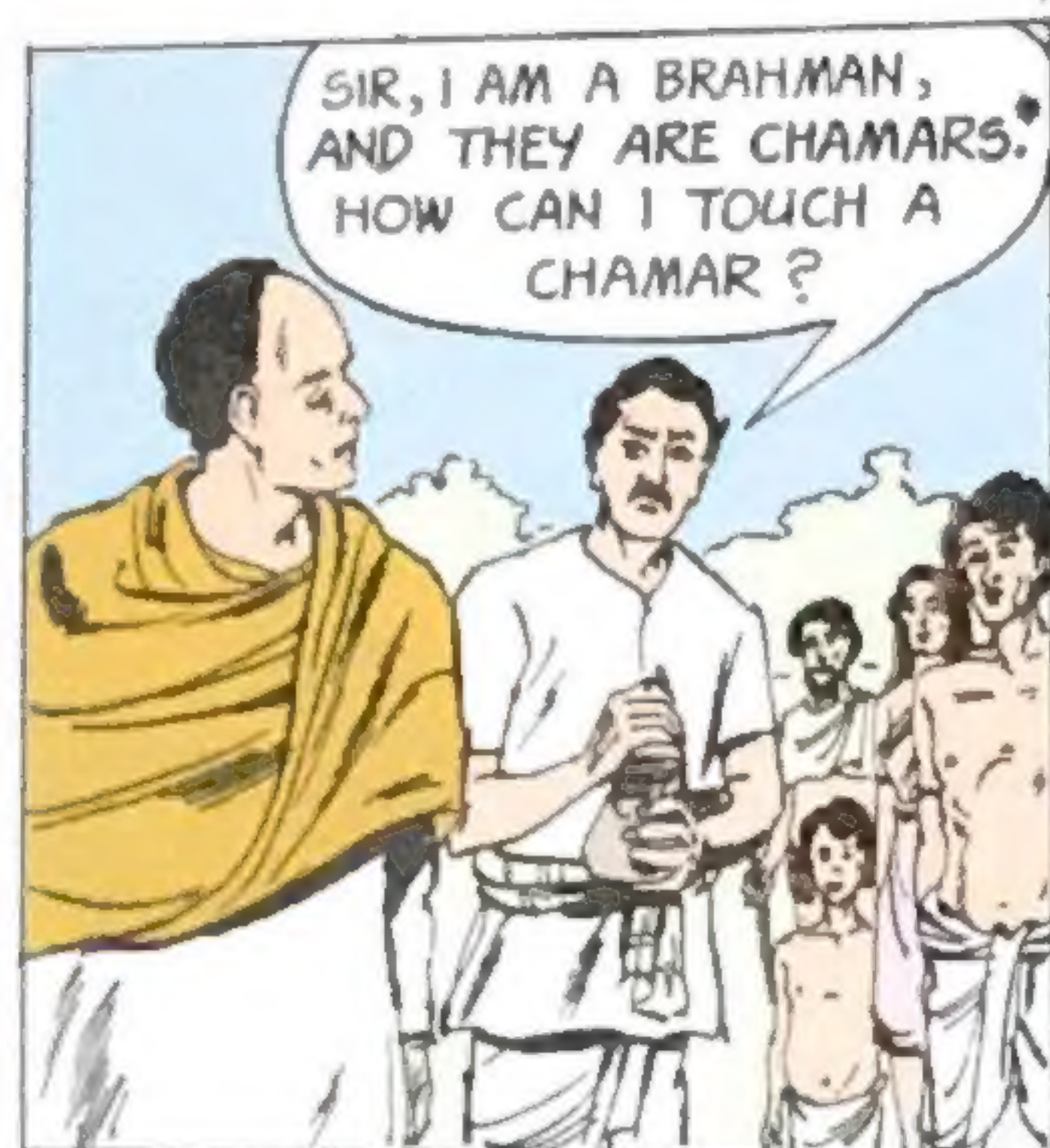
ARGUING WITH SUCH MEN IS USELESS.

VIDYASAGAR STARTED A SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN. HE EXPLAINED PATIENTLY WHY WIDOW REMARRIAGE WAS RIGHT. THEN —

IF YOU ARE IN FAVOUR OF WIDOW REMARRIAGE, SIGN HERE.

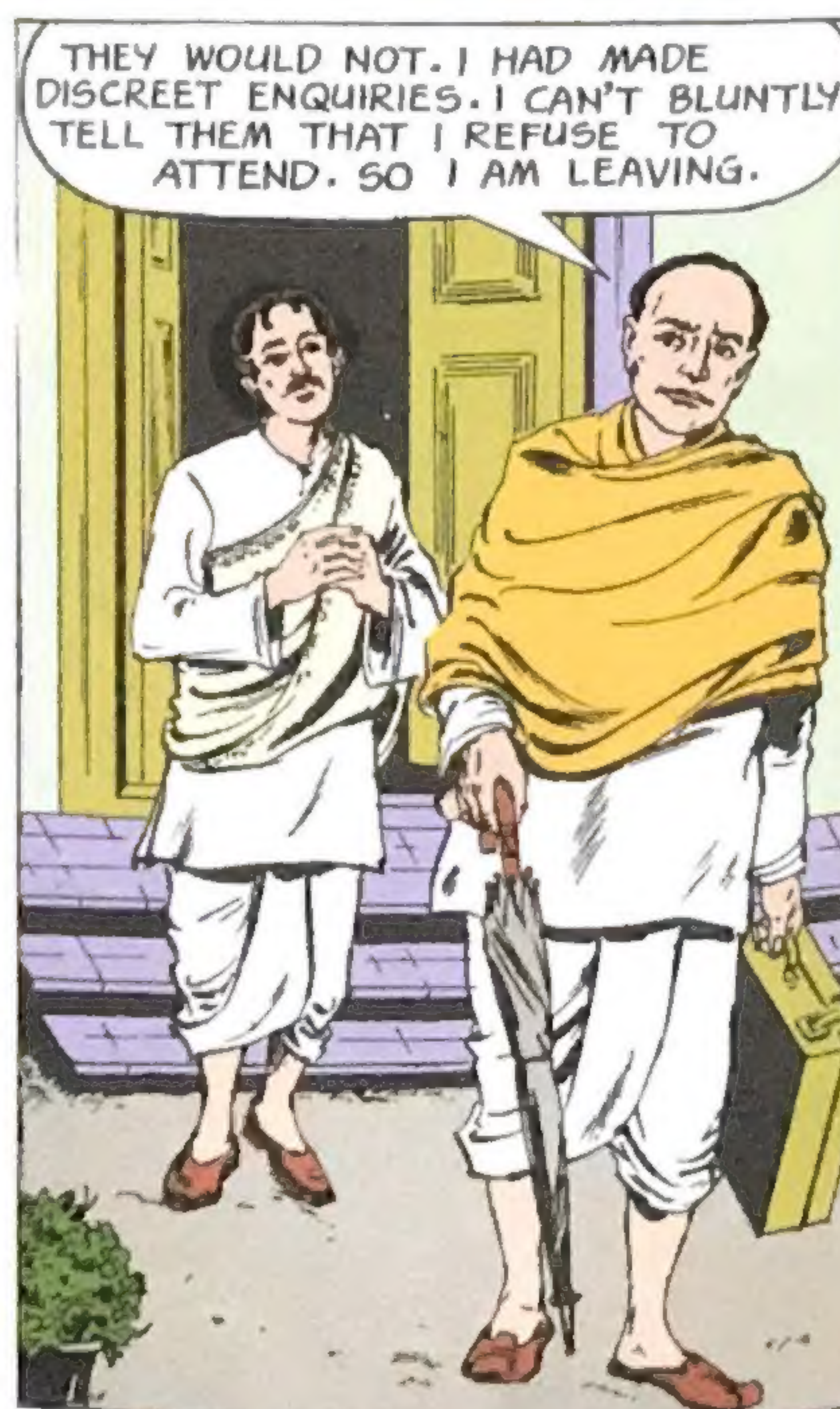
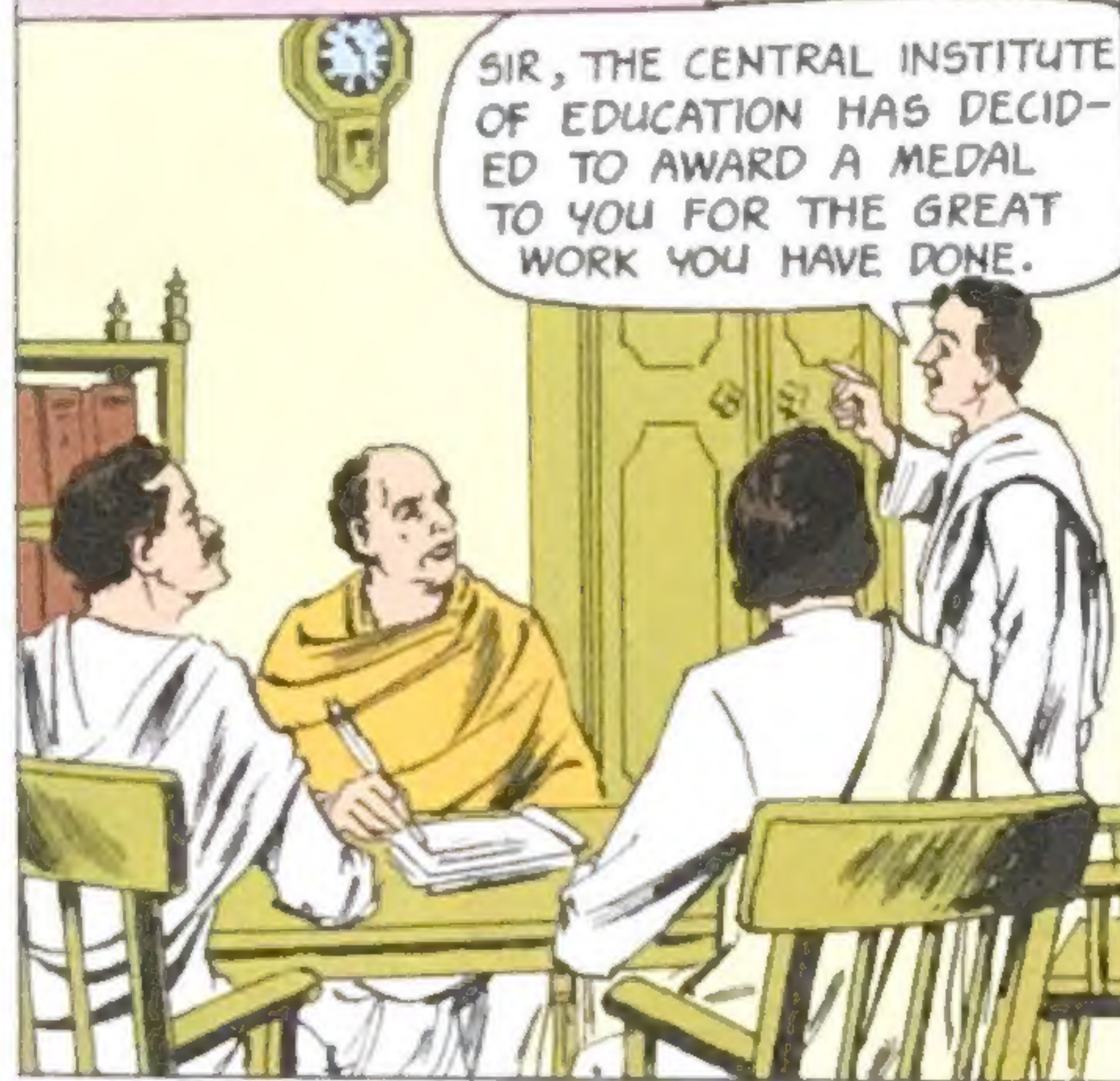
YOU HAVE CONVINCED ME. I WILL GLADLY SIGN.



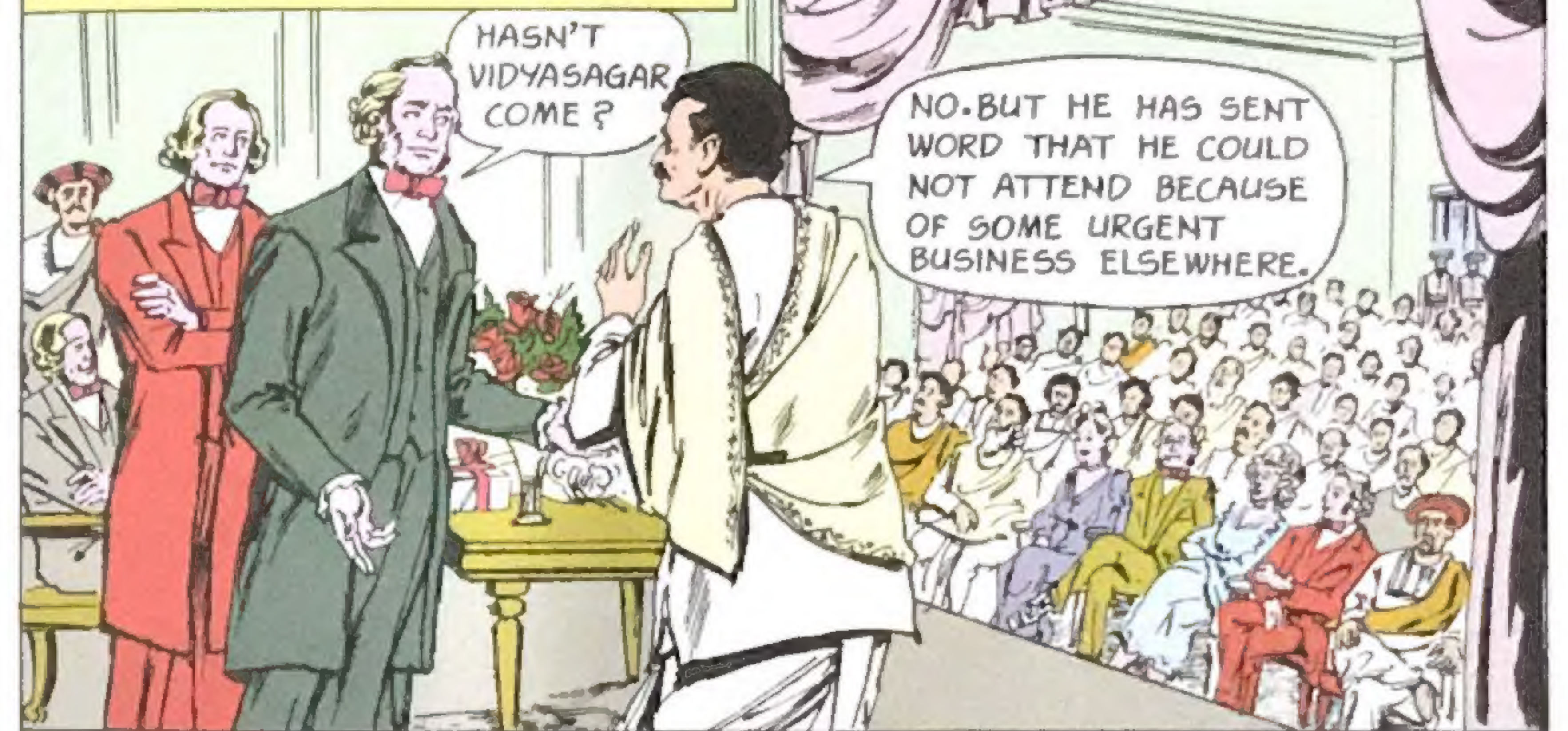


LATER, THE SAME MICHAEL MADHUSUDAN DUTT WAS TO REVOLUTIONISE THE FACE OF BENGALI POETRY.

VIDYASAGAR'S FAME SPREAD FAR AND WIDE. EVEN RAMAKRISHNA, THE GREAT SAGE, CAME TO SEE HIM. THERE WAS RECOGNITION OF HIS SOCIAL WORK TOO. ONE DAY —



ON THE DAY OF THE FUNCTION —



A FEW DAYS LATER, AT VIDYASAGAR'S HOUSE —



BUT VIDYASAGAR DID NOT REST ON HIS LAURELS. HE INTENSIFIED HIS DRIVE AGAINST CHILD MARRIAGE AND CONTINUED HIS WORK IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION TILL THE VERY END. MILLIONS MOURNED HIS DEATH.

